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Holmes e-mailed The American Legion's Emblem Sales, which quickly ordered production of the coins. So far, sales have been brisk.

Holmes has already given a coin to his daughter-in-law. "I love the design," Holmes says. "It has the colors of our country and the Blue Star Banner." *Greg Latza*

Purchase a Blue Star coin:  www.legion.org/emblemsales

The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.5 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 14,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.

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'Partners for God and Country'

Thank you for the fine article on Scouting's 100th anniversary (February) and for The American Legion's support of Boy Scouts of America. My Scoutmaster was a Lone Scout in 1910, an Eagle Scout, and devoted his life to leading boys in the Scouting program. I joined his troop in the summer of 1938 and came to love Scouting. After my service and two years of college, I applied for a job with my local Scout Council and was accepted as a district Scout executive. This led to a 31-year career with the Boy Scouts in Massachusetts and Vermont. During those 31 years, I had the honor to present 164 young men with their Eagle Scout badges. The 164th was my first grandson.

Over those years, I met hundreds of wonderful Scouting volunteers, the heart of the movement. Scouting was the most powerful force in my life from the day I joined until I retired in 1987. My Scoutmaster was the most influential person in my life. Congratulations to Boy Scouts of America on its 100th anniversary, and continued success in the next 100 years.

— Bruce McMahon, Wallingford, Vt.



Boy Scouts of America

I was a Boy Scout in the 1950s. The things I learned then have proven to be valuable to me even to this day. When I went into the Army in 1958, dismounted drill was no problem. I had already learned it in Scouting, as well as hiking with a backpack and setting up a pup tent. Even today, I try to live by the Scout Oath, the Scout Law and the Scout Motto.

— John T. Travis, Mount Vernon, Ind.

Federal marijuana ban

I read February's "Big Issues" and am compelled to write. Both representatives are completely off the mark.

Whatever one's position on the use, legalization or decriminalization of marijuana (or anything else), the real question is why the federal government is involved in any way with the criminalization, licensing or restriction of substances. Specifically, where in the Constitution is the obligation to criminalize and prosecute drug use directly assigned to the federal government? Unless it is so assigned, it is not a

federal area of jurisdiction. Thus, the control, laws and prosecution all belong at the state level, and the states can act independently.

The Constitution – which all Legionnaires, at one time or another, swore to uphold and protect against all enemies, foreign and domestic – specifically limits the role of the federal government. Neither representative quoted is qualified or positioned to have meaningful input on the marijuana discussion. Rather, they are both biased by their positions as federal employees, toward unconstitutional federal control.

— Neil M. Christie, Houston

My dad is a World War II veteran who died of cancer in 1996. At the terminal stage, his pain was excruciating. Dad considered medical marijuana to treat the pain, but he declined it. The issue in his mind was one of remaining lucid as long as possible. It was not a moral or legal problem. His was a personal decision, and it gave him dignity in death.

Neither he nor I would support medical marijuana clinics free from scrutiny. To hide recreational drug distribution in the guise of medical marijuana makes no sense, but to deny its availability in an audited, regulated and medically prescribed circumstance makes no sense either. We attempt to control the distribution of other painkillers, and we prosecute violations. Why should medical marijuana be any different?

– Tom Brannon, Ridgecrest, Calif.

Rep. Maurice Hinchey has chosen to subvert the purpose and intent of the Federal Marijuana Act of 1937. Ample anodyne medications can be legally prescribed for those with painful symptoms. Unfortunately, in those states where quasi-legality has replaced lawful prohibition, distributors soon become grower-hucksters, and proliferation of both activities quickly occurs, to the detriment of the common good.

– Benjamin K. Souler, Prescott, Ariz.

To critics' claims that the Justice Department's decision not to prosecute medical marijuana distributors weakens enforcement of drug laws, I say, "Good!" Most drug bans were racially motivated in their enactment, with unfair racial consequences in enforcement. Also, prohibition has never been shown to be effective. It only leads to increasing crime. Money spent on enforcement and prisons would be better spent on education and treatment.

– Mike Swadener, South Bend, Ind.

Caregiver pay and support

I am writing in regards to Tom Philpott's column (Veterans Update, February). My husband was wounded in Vietnam on May 14, 1967. He was a medic who loved and cared for everyone with whom he served, and he was proud to serve our country. He has a brain injury and is 100-percent permanently and totally disabled. I have been a caregiver to him for 41 years. As the years go by, he does not get better. Thank you for finally recognizing that being a caregiver is a full-time job and that we all need support, too.

– Pat Ainsworth, Benicia, Calif.

'Family Matters'

Nancy Pelosi fails to address the fact that the proposed health-care bill will cut Medicare Part B (February). Cutting Part B will hurt military retirees under TRICARE for Life. I personally don't like anything about the health-care bill, but I find it most insulting when public servants assume military retirees can be fooled into believing Part B cuts won't affect our TRICARE program. Remember "stay for 20 and get free medical care"? Lie to me once, now lie to me twice? Sorry, but that dog don't hunt.

– Larry Niemoetka, Vacaville, Calif.

'How to Outmaneuver the Bad Guys'

James H. Anderson's article (February) was more noteworthy for what it didn't say than for what it did. Islamic terrorism thrives because it finds fertile ground in our nation's foreign and military policies, which

center on alignments with repressive and autocratic regimes, bases in the Middle East and access to oil resources. Until we shift to policies promoting peace, justice and respect for human dignity – which are among the tenets of Islam – no amount of military resources, intelligence, technology or diplomacy will succeed in countering the appeal of terror to youthful and disenfranchised populations throughout the Muslim world.

– Steve Davies, Pelham Manor, N.Y.

'Peaches and Pound Cake'

Retired Maj. Gen. Robert H. Scales nailed the overall experience of the American fighting man (January). I joined the draft in 1966 and served until 1968 – two of the longest years of my life, but two I am proud of despite the failed political outcome. When people ask me about Vietnam, I tell them I was made stronger by the experience. That statement is only understood by a combat veteran.

– Kurt Watson, Mission, Texas

'A Prayer Remembered'

I enjoyed the article by former Pittsburgh Steelers player Rocky Bleier (January). I was an officer working at Irwin Army Hospital on Fort Riley, Kan., from 1969 to 1972. I had the opportunity to work with Rocky, and he was an inspiration to all the staff and injured in the clinic. He spent long hours on his rehabilitation. I can remember him working in the hallway on push-off from his three-point stance.

– Glenn A. Koehler, Holiday Island, Ark.

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Let's reverse the backlog, not just slow it

The Department of Veterans Affairs faces extraordinary challenges as the second decade of the 21st century unfolds. There's a new GI Bill to manage. Employment and business opportunities for veterans are hard to stimulate in a slowly recovering economy. Access to affordable health care, hope for the homeless and proper burial for those who honorably served our nation are costly and unwieldy to provide, even for the second-largest arm of the federal government.

The fastest-swelling elephant in the kitchen, however, is the backlog of undecided VA benefits claims. The speed, efficiency and accuracy of VA's outdated, paper-based claims-adjudication process influences almost every other aspect of the system. A claims decision determines a veteran's access to VA health care. A claims decision can relieve a sufferer of post-traumatic stress disorder from the vicious cycle of substance abuse and family instability. A claims decision can help a veteran entrepreneur get a federal contract or leave a job that is slowly making a service-connected disability worse.

That is why VA's current situation – somewhere between 500,000 and 1 million undecided claims – cannot be tolerated anymore. The White House has recommended hiring 4,000 new VA claims processors in fiscal year 2011, simply to prevent the problem from getting a lot worse. That is not good enough. We need to reverse the backlog.

Politicians on both sides of the aisle have promised to make VA's antiquated claims-adjudication process a high priority, as they have since the Eisenhower administration. And yet here we are, slipping down the slope of VA's inability to keep up with a claims curve that grew by 75 percent between 2000 and 2009. VA officials themselves say the average veteran's wait for a benefits decision can be expected to increase to 190 days, up from 158, by early 2011. What a disgrace.

The American Legion must continually remind federal officials that proper care for veterans is a delayed cost of war. The same U.S. government that prepares and sends Americans to battle, then passes and administers laws providing benefits after discharge, cannot simply drag its feet and try to outlast the obligation. Too many veterans believe the government they swore to protect now just wants them to die, along with their unresolved claims.

VA's adjudication process is bogged down in part because work is graded not by satisfactory completion of a case but by the successful transfer of a file from one desk to another. This work-credit system needs to be overhauled. In an era when most Americans can file their income taxes or apply for college aid online within an hour, technological solutions that ease the process without compromising quality are quite possible. Social Security benefits are most often in the hands of those who need them within a month of filing. We know VA is working on this, but delivery of a new system cannot just be a high priority year after year. It needs to be a reality now.

A new generation of service-disabled Americans is pouring into VA looking for help. And yes, veterans of past wars are still here, too, waiting and wondering about their claims. We have waited too long.

Clarence E. Hill



National Commander
Clarence E. Hill

MEMORANDA

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The American Legion Veterans Benefits Calculator gives veterans a head start in their efforts to file benefits claims. By simply clicking through an application at www.legion.org, veterans or family members can view and print both a list of benefits they may be eligible to receive and contact information for a nearby American Legion service officer who can help complete the process.

www.legion.org/benefitscalculator

LEGION VIDEO ADDRESSES CLAIMS PROCESS

The American Legion's position on the VA claims process is explained in a video presentation by Peter Gaytan, executive director of The American Legion's Washington office.

www.legion.org/legiontv

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Market-based carbon allowances



SUPPORT

**Sen. Maria Cantwell,
D-Wash.**

■ Cantwell is a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

The controversy over the mammoth climate-change bill passed by the House last year demonstrates that a new, bipartisan approach is needed. Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, and I believe we have found that new approach. Our Carbon Limits and Energy for America's Renewal (CLEAR) Act offers a market-based way to gradually lower carbon pollution while protecting families from price increases and investing in America's clean-energy future.

The CLEAR Act is 39 pages long, won't expand the federal government or increase the deficit, and controls pollution by auctioning "carbon shares" in gradually diminishing quantities. By putting a predictable price on pollution, the bill empowers the free market to find the best technologies to reduce greenhouse gases.

The CLEAR Act returns three-quarters of the revenue raised at auction directly to every American in the form of dividends, fully offsetting higher energy prices for all but the wealthiest 20 percent, who consume more carbon fuels. For a family of four, the dividend would average about \$1,100 per year. The remaining revenue would go toward clean-energy development, rebuilding the U.S. energy system, and emission-reduction projects in agriculture and forestry. We also protect energy-intensive producers, such as steel mills, from foreign competition.

We believe Americans want climate legislation that will limit carbon pollution without harming the economy, and energize our nation's entrepreneurs and workers to create – and dominate – a clean-energy market that will be worth trillions. With the right approach, we will transform one of our nation's greatest threats into one of our greatest opportunities.



OPPOSE

**Sen. John Barrasso,
R-Wyo.**

■ Barrasso is a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

While the president talks about green jobs, Americans still need the red, white and blue jobs that power our country and our economy.

With 10 percent unemployment, Washington should not choose winners and losers. The

CLEAR Act rewards one type of energy job over another.

The administration and some members of Congress also continue to push policies that will kill U.S. jobs and make it harder for our country to climb out of the current recession. The

cap-and-trade scheme that passed the House last year will make it more expensive for businesses to operate in the United States. I oppose the bill. If it becomes law, American families will pay an extra tax every time they switch on a light, heat up an oven or turn on a television.

Cap and trade will reduce our ability to compete against countries like China and India. Emissions in China will continue to increase every year through 2050.

While the cap-and-trade bill has been in the media spotlight, Washington bureaucrats are privately plotting a series of extreme environmental regulations. The Environmental Protection Agency is trying to regulate carbon emissions from a wide range of sources. These regulations will crush communities across our country and potentially bankrupt hospitals, farms, nursing homes and commercial businesses.

There is a better way forward. We should pass legislation that will invest in technology that will make our energy cleaner and more affordable, then sell it to the rest of the world. This will provide us with a source of energy that is diverse, efficient, sustainable, reliable and comprehensive.

When it comes to energy, we need it all.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

The CLEAR Act seeks to reduce carbon emissions via an auction system. Critics say federal regulation favors one type of energy job over another and will end up raising energy prices.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

The Honorable (name), U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510 • Phone: (202) 224-3121

The Honorable (name), U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515 • Phone: (202) 225-3121

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The doctor is in

Feel rushed in the doctor's office? Be encouraged. A study of national health data has found that the average duration of family doctor visits has increased by 16 percent over the past decade. Primary-care physicians spent nearly 21 minutes with patients in 2005, compared to just 18 minutes in 1997. The quality of care that patients receive has also improved modestly, but sadly, one thing hasn't: doctors are no more likely to counsel patients about diet and exercise today than they were a decade ago.



Media Bakery

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.

Pros and cons of Internet health resources

A growing number of people are searching for health information on the Internet. Perhaps you've looked for details about a particular symptom or treatment, or searched for facts about a disease or disorder. You may even make health decisions based on sources that appear on the first page of a search engine. But do you know which online health sources are credible and which are questionable?

Sixty-one percent of Americans now search for health information on the Internet, according to a recent survey by the Pew Internet and American Life Project. Six out of 10 said the information they found online affected their decision about how to treat an illness or condition, and 56 percent said it changed how they maintained their own health or the health of another.

Transferring the trust you have in your doctors to online medical sources is a common mistake, says Dr. John M. Martinez, medical director of Coastal Sports and Wellness Medical Center in San Diego. "The average person should be concerned about the validity of the information provided and the health-care background and training of the person or company providing the information," he says. "While there are many great sources of medical information on the Internet, there are also just as many that slant the information they provide to support a product, medication or treatment from which they may be profiting."

continued on page 14



Media Bakery

HealthNewsReview.org

provides a checklist for evaluating health-care claims from any source.

1. What's the total cost?
2. How often do benefits occur?
3. How often does harm occur?
4. How strong is the evidence?
5. Is this condition exaggerated?
6. Are there alternative options?
7. Is this really a new approach?
8. Is it available to me?
9. Who's promoting this?
10. Do they have a conflict of interest?

The costs of treating, and preventing, diabetes

Costs associated with treating diabetes, and lost productivity due to the disease, are estimated at \$174 billion annually, *The Wall Street Journal* reports. This has spurred efforts to help prevent the 60 million Americans considered "pre-diabetic" from becoming diabetic. Some prevention programs include the use of medication, while others challenge participants to change their lifestyles. But these have costs, too. Health-care reform legislation in Congress includes \$34 billion to support prevention programs.



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Diet shopping

Health.com offers healthy and helpful advice for shopping while on a diet.

At the meat counter, look for cuts that are 95 percent lean or higher. Choose

chicken or turkey breast when buying poultry. And remember that shrimp is a "high-protein, low-fat, low-calorie option."

Hold the line on fat in the dairy aisle.

Ask the deli to slice cheese into 1-ounce portions or choose string cheese. Plain nonfat yogurt is a versatile and healthy addition to many meals.

When it comes to veggies, "grab a rainbow." To get a variety of nutrients, try to include every color of the spectrum – red, green, orange, yellow, purple, white – in your diet.



Media Bakery

Health Web sites you can trust:

Alzheimer's Association

alz.org

American Heart Association

americanheart.org

American Diabetes Association

diabetes.org

Cancer.net

cancer.net

Cleveland Clinic

my.clevelandclinic.org

eMedicine

emedicine.com

Family Doctor

familydoctor.org

Health Talk Online

healthtalkonline.org

Mayo Clinic

mayoclinic.com

MedPage Today

medpagetoday.com

MedlinePlus

medlineplus.gov

Medpedia

medpedia.com

Medscape

medscape.com

continued from page 12

Recent studies looked at the health Web sites Internet searches deliver most frequently, and found that sites search engines feature on their first pages are more likely to recommend treatments based on little or no evidence and often fail to cite sources or report conflicts of interest.

Also, people often delay seeing their physician for serious conditions, such as angina, because they read that chest pain could be heartburn. "One reason medical training takes so long is the length of time it takes physicians to learn how to assess a general complaint like 'I'm tired,' along with a careful history and exam to differentiate the possible causes," Martinez says.

That said, there are also significant benefits to having credible, current online health resources available. "Patients have become much more knowledgeable about their diseases and medical conditions," Martinez says. "This change has helped many of my patients become more proactive in their treatment."

To determine whether or not a Web site offers trustworthy information, you need to know what to look for. "Probably the most important question to ask when looking at an Internet health resource is not what is written, but who wrote it," says Dr. James Dom Dera, assistant professor of family medicine at Northeastern Ohio Universities Colleges of Medicine and Pharmacy. "Some nice graphics and a catchy URL, combined with some official-looking references, are all it takes to make a site on the Internet look legitimate," he says.

As one example of the benefits and risks of Internet health resources, Dom Dera points to the recent H1N1 pandemic. "On one hand, a quick search of 'H1N1 symptoms' provides some fairly accurate answers from reliable sites. However, search 'H1N1 vaccine' and not only do you find many news stories of questionable usefulness, but you'll also find a great deal of misinformation and fear-mongering."

Medical journalists often ask certain questions to vet the quality and accuracy of new treatments, tests, products and procedures they report on for top U.S. newspapers. Gary Schwitzer, associate professor at University of Minnesota School of Journalism and Mass Communication, says these questions can also help you decide whether or not online information is trustworthy.

Kathy Summers writes about health, nutrition and fitness for a variety of magazines, book publishers and Web sites.



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The genetics of mental illness

BY DR. JOEL KUPERSMITH

Media Bakery

A new VA study will probe the genetic basis of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. The two diseases affect some 170,000 VA patients in total and can have a devastating impact on these veterans and their families.

The \$33 million effort will involve up to 38,000 veterans at approximately 25 VA sites. Taking part will be up to 9,000 people with schizophrenia, 9,000 with bipolar disorder and another 20,000 without either disease, for comparison.

Veterans' genetic results will be linked to their VA medical records. By studying volunteers' medical histories, researchers hope to reveal links between genes and health problems. At the same time, veterans' privacy will be rigorously safeguarded: databases will be password-protected, and specimens will be bar-coded and "de-identified." This means they can be traced back to individual veterans but only by researchers who go through a strict approval process.

DNA will be extracted from blood samples and scanned for genetic variants. Those that appear in veterans with mental illness but not in their "healthy" peers will become suspects in the hunt for genetic risk factors. The study also aims to find genes tied specifically to thinking problems. Participants will take tests that measure attention and memory. They'll also be observed writing checks, making telephone calls and doing other everyday activities. The ability to do such tasks is a major factor in whether people with serious mental illness can work and live independently.

VA is hopeful that the study will lead to significant advances in prevention, diagnosis and treatment that will benefit veterans and other Americans with serious mental illness.

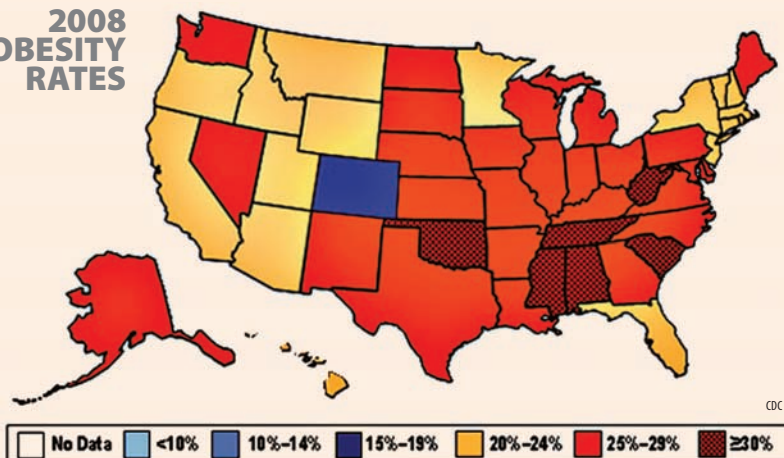
Joel Kupersmith, M.D., is chief research and development officer for the Veterans Health Administration.

Obesogenic

If current trends continue, 43 percent of adults in the United States will be obese by 2018, say health economists at Emory University – and that's not counting adults who will be merely overweight. By that same year, obesity-related health-care costs will jump from today's \$361 per person to \$1,425.

In 2008, obesity rates increased in 23 states, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In at least 30 states, more than a quarter of adults and nearly one-third of children are now obese. Southern states have the highest rates of obesity and related diseases, such as

2008
OBESITY
RATES



diabetes and high blood pressure. The CDC blames society. The environment has become

"obesogenic" by promoting physical inactivity, overeating and consumption of less healthy foods.

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'Don't ask, don't tell' under scrutiny

BY TOM PHILPOTT

Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, turned a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on the "don't ask, don't tell" law into high drama Feb. 2 when he surprised senators, saying it's time for change.

Speaking only for himself, Mullen said allowing homosexuals to serve openly "would be the right thing to do ... (W)e have in place a policy which forces young men and women to lie about who they are in order to defend their fellow citizens."

The nation's highest-ranking officer didn't claim to know for certain how the force would react. But, Mullen said, "I never underestimate their ability to adapt."

President Obama campaigned on a promise to repeal "don't ask, don't tell" so homosexuals in the military don't have to hide their sexual orientation. He renewed that vow in his first State of the Union address.

"We have received our orders from the commander in chief and we are moving out accordingly," Defense Secretary Robert Gates told senators.

But it was Mullen's unqualified support for gays being allowed to serve openly that made the noontime hearing historic.

Gates and Mullen agreed that careful preparations must be made to ensure that a repeal won't seriously impact morale or readiness. Both leaders also acknowledged that troops and their families are already under extraordinary stress from nearly a decade of wartime deployments.

To ready the force, Gates has a "high-level working group" reviewing all issues associated with the law's repeal. By year's end, it will make recommendations "to minimize disruption and polarization within the ranks, with special attention paid to those serving on the front lines."

Republicans immediately criticized Gates and Mullen for backing a repeal before the study group even begins to examine the effects. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., ranking Republican on the committee, didn't disguise his anger, calling statements by Gates and Mullen "clearly biased" and delivered without consideration of the views

of Congress, or perhaps even their combatant commanders. McCain held up a statement opposing the law's repeal that he said had been signed by 1,000 retired general and flag officers.

"I'm happy to say we still have a Congress of the United States that would have to pass a law to repeal 'don't ask, don't tell,' despite your efforts to repeal it, in many respects, by fiat," McCain said.

When someone suggested 60 votes would be needed to avoid a Republican filibuster on repeal, Committee Chairman Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., said repeal language could be added to the defense

authorization bill. In that case, opponents of a change would need 60 votes to strike the amendment from the bill.

Gates said that on revisiting this controversial issue, leaders are likely to find "attitudes toward homosexuality may have changed considerably, both in society generally and in the military."

His working group, co-chaired by DoD General Counsel Jay Johnson and Gen. Carter Ham, commander of U.S. Army Europe, will examine all regulations and policies likely to need revision, including those dealing with benefits, base housing, fraternization and misconduct discharges.

The group's first goal, Gates said, is to "reach out to the force" to understand attitudes about the law's repeal to help commands transition with "minimum disruption" to critical missions.

The review will take up to a year, Gates said. Meanwhile, regulations enforcing current law will be revised to be "fairer" to gays, raising the level of officer authorized to initiate an inquiry and tightening what constitutes "credible information" to conduct such an inquiry, he added.

There will be fewer instances of members who are serving honorably being "outed" by someone "with a motive to harm," Gates promised, even if Congress doesn't repeal the law.

Tom Philpott, a former Coast Guardsman, has written about veterans and military personnel issues for 30 years.

In October 2009, The American Legion's National Executive Committee passed **Resolution 34**, supporting DoD's "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Responding to a recent Senate hearing on the law, National Commander Clarence Hill said that now is not the time for change, as "the U.S. military is in the highest state of op tempo since World War II, and as a result, there is enormous stress upon the troops." The American Legion has no position on the compatibility of homosexuality and military service.



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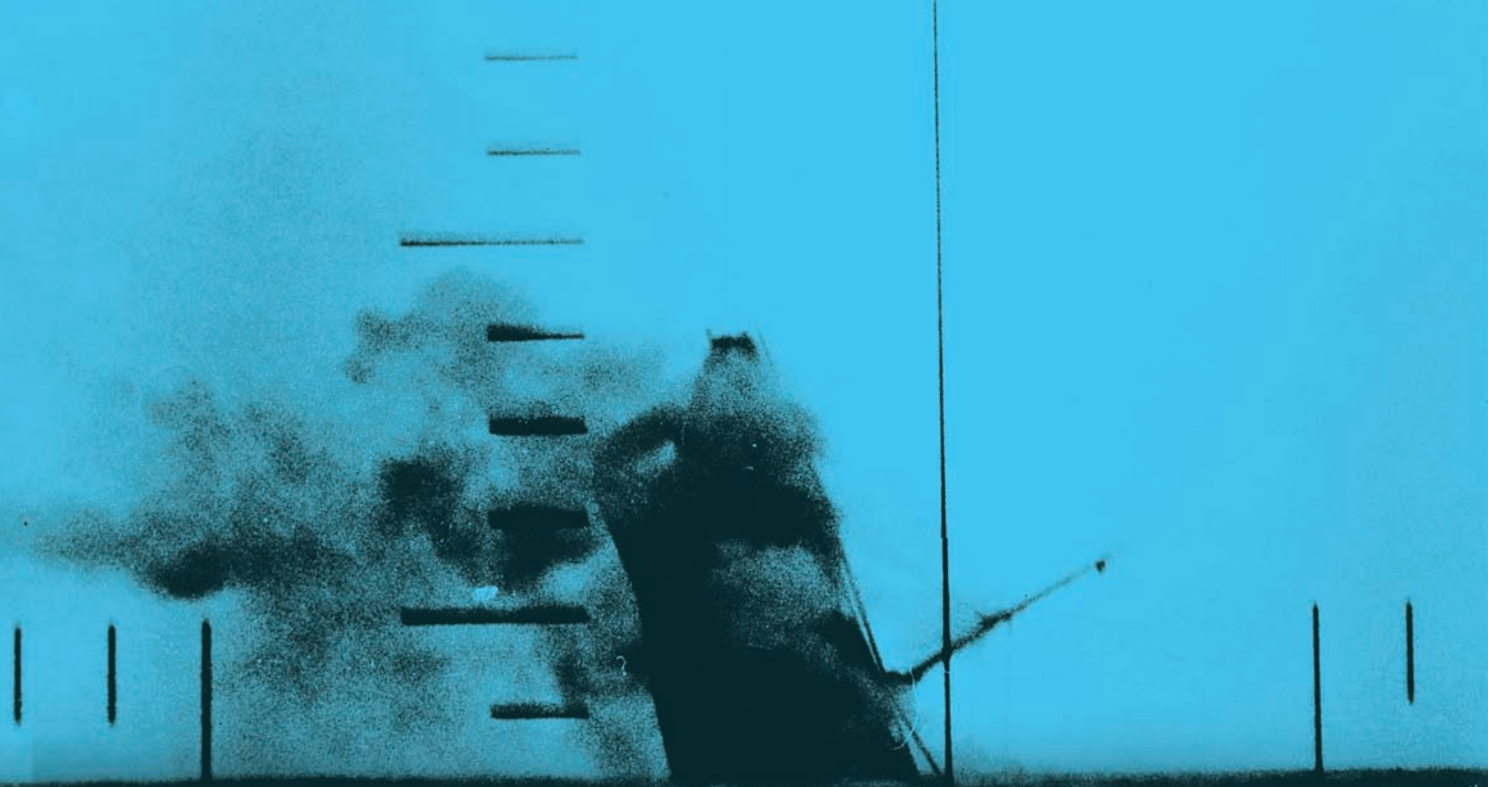
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SILENT HUNTERS

Regarding their contributions in World War II, the silent service may now speak up.

They must. The youngest among them are 83, and we're losing them fast – of the 16,000 Americans who volunteered for duty aboard submarines during the war, maybe 2,000 are living.

Though they comprised only 1.6 percent of the Navy, these men sank more than half of the 10 million tons of military and merchant shipping lost by Japan. By depriving the enemy of oil, food and other raw materials to make war, they helped strangle Japan's economy and hastened surrender. Talk about victory at sea.

The cost was high: 375 officers and 3,131 enlisted men on 52 submarines. That's the lowest casualty rate of any combatant submarine service on any side in the war, but among the highest percentages killed in action of any U.S. service arm.

Last September, members of U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II gathered in Green Bay, Wis., for their 55th national convention – likely their last official reunion. Nearly 165 attended. They spent the week swapping sea stories and touring the USS *Cobia* in nearby Manitowoc, where 28 submarines were built during the war. They also heard more about the discoveries of *Lagarto* and *Grunion*, two boats lost in action.

As always, said Owen Williams, convention chairman and USS *Barb* veteran, the purpose of the gathering was "to perpetuate the memory of those who gave their lives in submarine warfare."

Those who returned and are still among us should be honored as men who faced constant peril as they waged war on and beneath the ocean waves. *The American Legion Magazine* shares a few of their stories here.



'YOU COULD HAVE HEARD A PIN DROP'

Richard Clower, USS *Seahorse*

We were given the dubious honor of going into the Sea of Japan to plot minefields in preparation for the invasion. We were in there about two or three days when we were found. The captain took her down to the bottom, which is about 250 feet, and we were getting the hell kicked out of us. Willy Williams was in the motor machine



Mike Roemer

room holding down the flapper valve, because every time a depth charge would hit, the flapper valve would open and water would come in. So he was holding it down and using unprofessional language, calling the Japanese everything he could think of, and Big Ben Williams was on his knees praying. He looks up and says, "Willy, this is a time to be praying, not sinning."

We were lucky we got out. The captain put uniforms and food and dishes in the torpedo tubes and fired them out.

About half an hour later, we could hear the ship's screws leaving. We presumed they thought they sunk us, and they came pretty damn close to it. We were able to surface, but it would have been dangerous if we tried to go back down again. The captain said we'd be taking our lives into our own hands. We had so many leaks, and that's when we called Guam to send planes over to protect us. They escorted us almost all the way in.

I went on *Seahorse's* third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh war patrols. We sank about 24 ships, and the only time we didn't feel a lot of exultation was when we sank a Japanese submarine. You could have heard a pin drop then. When we sank a freighter or a man-of-war, it was, "Ha ha, we got 'em!" But when we sank that submarine, we knew what they were going through as it was going down. Some of them were trying to close the watertight doors; we knew that. It would keep the water out temporarily, but there's no way in the world everybody's going down to 1,000 feet or however deep it was. It was going to cave in. A submarine can't take that much pressure. So there was no yelling, there was no screaming, there was no "go-get-'em" like if it was a freighter.

Clower is a member of American Legion Post 14 in Bozeman, Mont.

LEFT: Seen through the periscope of USS *Wahoo* (SS 238), which torpedoed her, the Japanese cargo ship *Nittsu Maru* sinks in the Yellow Sea off China on March 23, 1943. Six months later, *Wahoo* was attacked and sunk in the La Perouse Strait. Naval Historical Foundation



Matt Grills

'MY LIFELONG FRIEND'

Wendell Benson, USS *Trutta*

On our second war patrol, we picked up a flier. We were 50 miles off the beach of Japan when the Okinawa typhoon happened. That was the typhoon where the cruiser *Pittsburgh* lost her bow to heavy seas.

Normally when a submarine is at periscope depth, it can be very rough topside, but you don't feel any wave motion. We were down 250 feet that night taking 20-degree rolls either side of center. The Pacific Ocean was turning itself upside down.

Our batteries were low, and the skipper said, "Let's put all four mains on the battery charge ... we'll head into the wind, charge these batteries, and then get down and get out of this stuff." The seas were still running 40 feet high. We had just surfaced and the lookouts were in place when they started screaming, "Lifeboat, 2 o'clock," and I was introduced to my lifelong friend, Arthur Burry.

I was known as a good swimmer, and Morris, one of the radiomen, was a good swimmer. They tied monkey fists around us and tied those to the lifelines on either side of the boat, so they didn't lose us. We jumped in the water, grabbed the life raft, and that was the end of it right there – the next thing I knew, I was on the deck in front of the conning tower. A big swell had come up and put all three of us in a lifeboat right down on the deck.

Arthur Burry had been in the water six days. He wouldn't respond to anything we tried. We'd throw lines and he couldn't grab them. All of the things that were necessary for rescue he could not do, and that's why we had to go in and get him. We nursed him back to health.

Arthur Burry is a fellow Iowan. He was a 1942 graduate of Davenport Central High School, and after the war he became a California nut farmer. Every Christmas, my wife gets a package of English walnuts from Arthur Burry's farm with just one line written on it: "Thank you, Wendell."

Benson is a member of American Legion Post 46 in Marshalltown, Iowa.

An underwater photograph of a shipwreck, likely the USS Lagarto, covered in coral and marine life. An American flag is visible on the upper part of the wreck. Numerous small fish are swimming around the structure. The background is a deep blue ocean.

ON ETERNAL PATROL

Since 2005, five U.S. submarines lost during World War II have been found, starting with USS Lagarto.

BY MATT GRILLS

Jamie Macleod had been diving in the Gulf of Thailand for years. He knew a missing U.S. submarine was out there somewhere. Everybody knew. He also knew quite well the challenge in trying to locate it. "We've got 90,000 square miles, and ships have been lost there for centuries," the British diver says. "But if you don't look, you don't find."

A friend of Macleod's who runs a Web site listing shipwrecks in the region received an e-mail from Roy Leonhardt, a Vietnam-era submarine veteran associated with the U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II (SUBVETS) organization. He wanted to know if any divers working south of Thailand had been looking for USS *Lagarto* (SS 371), reportedly sunk there May 3, 1945, with 86 men aboard.

The e-mail made it to Macleod. His first reaction was that the location was simply too remote: "We never go down there."

But he was scheduled to pick up his new boat, the MV *Trident*, and wasn't going to be too far from *Lagarto's* last reported position. So he contacted people he knew in the Thai fishing industry, and collected coordinates from those who had lost nets in the area. "We started at the nearest one working outward, and that's how we found *Lagarto*," Macleod says.

Charles Shaw

On May 19, 2005 – 60 years after the submarine disappeared – Macleod and fellow diver Stewart Oehl sent down a weighted line when their bottom sounder detected an anomaly rising some 15 meters from the seabed.

“On this particular occasion, our shot was perfect,” Macleod recalls. “As I got down to about 200 feet, the bow of the submarine was right in front of me. It was unmistakable. Then I moved aftward and found the 5-inch gun and the conning tower. So it’s obviously a submarine, and too close to be anything other than the *Lagarto*. The odds of an unknown mystery U.S. submarine right on top of where the *Lagarto* was reportedly last seen are millions to one. So we were pretty sure.”

Lagarto's Last Days. Named for the lagarto, or lizard fish, *Lagarto* was a *Balao*-class submarine built and launched in Manitowoc, Wis., in 1944. The skipper, Cmdr. Frank Latta, was a veteran of nine war patrols and received the Navy Cross.

During its second war patrol, the submarine was ordered to the Gulf of Siam, where on May 2, 1945, *Lagarto* received a report from USS *Baya* (SS 318) alerting it to the presence of a nearby Japanese convoy. The two planned a joint attack, but enemy escorts detected *Baya* and drove it off with gunfire. The submarines rendezvoused the next day and planned another attack: *Lagarto* would dive on the convoy’s track to make contact at 1400, while *Baya* was 10 to 15 miles farther along. But *Lagarto* failed to respond to contact reports, and *Baya* went it alone, only to be driven off a second time. No further contact was made with *Lagarto*, and the submarine was announced as “overdue from patrol and presumed lost” Aug. 10, 1945.

After the war, Japanese records revealed that the minelayer *Hatsutaka*, believed to be one of the two radar-equipped escorts of the enemy convoy, recorded a depth-charge attack on a U.S. submarine. Not by accident, *Hatsutaka* was sunk 12 days later by USS *Hawkbill* (SS 366), whose commander was a friend of Latta’s and requested permission to divert from his patrol for a revenge strike when *Lagarto* was reported overdue.

The submarine and its crew weren’t forgotten, especially in *Lagarto*’s birthplace of Manitowoc.

In 1955, members of U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II assigned each of the 52 submarines lost during the war to a different state, for the purpose of establishing memorials, with California and New York each taking two. Fittingly, Wisconsin adopted *Lagarto*.

‘I DON’T KNOW WHY YOU WOULDN’T BE SCARED’

Norman Carroll, USS *Guitarro*

We were the 13th boat built at Manitowoc. The 11th boat built there, *Golet*, was tied alongside us at Midway. They had just come off their first war patrol, and we knew some of the guys from submarine school. They said, “Boy, it’s hell out there. Be careful.” We thanked them for their information and went out on our first war patrol. They went out on their second and were sunk.

We were under attack quite a bit. We sank a cruiser, and the Japanese were very perturbed. They located us and dropped 50 depth charges on us in 10 minutes. It threw the wooden decking from the deck gun and blew our running lights out. Salt water was pouring into our maneuvering room. If it had got up to the motor, we were done. We had to form a bucket brigade.

At one of our reunions in Manitowoc, I asked the engineering officer, “A few more feet and we would have been in trouble, huh?” He said it was more like inches. Nobody cracked up or anything, but I don’t know why you wouldn’t be scared, especially when you’re 19.

We had only one casualty. He got pneumonia. We were getting ready to go through the Lombok Straits between the Indian Ocean and the Sea of Siam. We were going through at night on the surface, and it was very well patrolled. We had to bury him at sea before we went up there. The skipper radioed in about this man being sick. All they sent back was, “Proceed with your mission.” Australia was 1,500 miles away.

With a normal burial, they would lash you up in a hammock. We didn’t have any hammocks, so the gunner’s mate said, “We’ll put a seabag over his head, strap a 5-inch shell between his legs, pull the other seabag up and lash them together. That will get him to the bottom, anyway.” So we had a service in the after-battery compartment with the skipper reading something out of the 23rd Psalm, if I remember right. Then they hoisted him up the after-battery hatch and heaved him overboard. Such an eerie feeling.

He had the bunk in the torpedo-loading hatch and I was in the one next to him. We used to talk a lot. It was such a great loss. When we got into port, we went to a Catholic church down in Perth, Australia, and asked the priest if he could dedicate a Mass to Richard Cranston. We wanted to pay for it, but he wouldn’t take a cent, not for something like that.

Carroll is a member of American Legion Post 527 in Sister Bay, Wis.



Mike Roemer

New 50 State \$2 bill Program™ now underway

Restricted release gives just 1 out of every 1,291 households an opportunity to get the entire State \$2 Bill Collection™



■ **NEVER BEFORE SEEN:** This is the new New York state overlaid \$2 bill that few have ever seen and everyone is scrambling to get. The World Reserve Monetary Exchange has restricted the release of its exclusive State \$2 Bill Collection™, so getting one would make you as happy as hitting the lottery.

By Joan Tedeschi
Universal Media Syndicate

Most Americans have never even seen a government issued \$2 bill, let alone the new never before seen state \$2 bills being overlaid and released exclusively by the World Reserve

Monetary Exchange.

According to Thomas C. Harris, former Deputy Director of the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing and consultant for the privately held World Reserve, "Less than 1% of all U.S. Government notes currently

produced are \$2 bills."

And finding one of the exclusive 50 state \$2 bills will be even more difficult. That's because it has just been announced that the release of the entire new State \$2 Bill Collection™ has been restricted. That means only 1 out of

every 1,291 U.S. households will even have a chance to get them all.

With this new State \$2 Bill Collection™ now underway, U.S. residents are expected to snatch up all they can while they can still get their hands on them. ■

Just 7 days left for U.S. residents to get the only existing state \$2 bills

Private hoard of never before seen state \$2 bills being released for the next 7 days, only in 4 packs of protective estate wallets each loaded with its own state \$2 bill for just \$12 per wallet

By R.K. Berry
Universal Media Syndicate

UMS – It's like a run on the banks. The phones just keep ringing off the hook.

That's because U.S. residents can only get the World Reserve's never before seen state overlaid \$2 bills for the next 7 days.

All residents have to do is call 1-888-485-8214 or one of the five Overflow Hotlines to get their new state bills.

These special Toll Free Hotlines have been set up because you can't get these exclusive bills at local banks, credit unions or even the Federal Reserve. They're

being banded in packs of four and released directly to U.S. residents exclusively by the World Reserve.

These crisp U.S. \$2 bills featuring the exclusively designed state overlaid printing are so precious you would never even dream of carrying them around in an ordinary leather wallet.

That's why they are being released in individually loaded rich protective estate wallets. They are so impressive, everyone will swear they must have been taken right from the President's desk.

"Everything in our vault may soon be gone. So residents

who want to get them now had better hurry and call," said Jefferson Marshall, Executive Director of the World Reserve Monetary Exchange.

Some collectors are always trying to snatch up all the \$2 bills issued by the Government they can get their hands on. They know that \$2 bills are almost impossible to find in your pocket change these days.

Originally issued in 1928, the currently designed \$2 bills have largely been locked away in the bowels of the U.S. Federal Reserve vaults, rarely distributed by banks and almost never seen

in circulation.

The \$2 bills issued by the Treasury Department's Bureau of Engraving and Printing, makers of all of the nation's paper currency, make up less than 1% of the \$670 billion in genuine U.S. currency that circulates worldwide, according to the U.S. Department of Treasury.

"That's why I've authorized a limited number of genuine Government issued \$2 bills to be overlaid with each state's restricted printing and released from our private vault reserve to all U.S. residents who beat the 7-day deadline. For now dealers can't

■ **LIMITED RELEASE BEGINS:** To the right is the never before seen entire 50 State \$2 Bill Collection™ shown off by the World Reserve. You can't get these exclusive state \$2 bills from local banks, credit unions or even the Federal Reserve. Dealers and collectors who are lucky enough to find them are sure to be charging a hefty premium to let them go. But getting the entire 50 State \$2 Bill Collection™ may be hard, since the release is being restricted. That's why the World Reserve Monetary Exchange has also decided to release all 50 states together in one complete collection to U.S. residents who beat the deadline by calling 1-888-485-8214 in the next 7 days.



get the vault packs of the state \$2 bills to make sure residents can get what they need," Marshall said.

"These exclusive state \$2 bills will be highly sought after and are extremely popular to hand out as gifts for friends and family. They are the perfect gift for any occasion," he said.

"That's why this announcement is being so widely advertised, to make sure every U.S. resident has a chance to get their own state \$2 bill," said Marshall.

They are sure to impress because most people have never even seen one of these

newly enhanced state \$2 bills featuring their state's skyline and significant state symbol with President Thomas Jefferson on the front.

"Since these are the only existing state \$2 bills, anyone who wants more than 10 sealed vault packs of 4 bills in protective estate wallets must submit requests in writing so there will be no hoarding by dealers," said Marshall.

"You better believe we will be strictly enforcing the limits so that we can guarantee there will be at least 10 vault packs for U.S. residents who call in the next 7 days," Marshall said. ■



■ **GET THEM WHILE YOU CAN:** Shown above inside the maximum security vault of the World Reserve Monetary Exchange is their entire 50 State \$2 Bill Collection™ that only 1 out of every 1,291 households will have an opportunity to get. Also shown are the new state \$2 bills in the protective estate wallets, only released banded together in packs of 4, that everyone is trying to get for themselves and to give as gifts. They are so impressive that those lucky enough to get them may feel like they were handed a million dollars.

HOW U.S. RESIDENTS CAN GET THEIR STATE \$2 BILLS

U.S. RESIDENTS ONLY

The special Toll Free Hotlines are open to U.S. residents only. Residents have just 7 days to get their states \$2 bills beginning at 8:00am today. If you miss the deadline you'll be turned away and forced to wait for future announcements in this publication or others, if any.

The World Reserve Monetary Exchange is only releasing the never before seen state overlaid \$2 bills banded together in packs of 4, each in its own protective estate wallet, for just \$12 per wallet and shipping to U.S. residents only. There is a strict limit of 10 state \$2 bill vault packs per household. To claim yours call the special Toll Free Hotline numbers below.

SPECIAL TOLL FREE HOTLINE:

1-888-485-8214

CODE: NL119

OVERFLOW HOTLINES

1-888-485-8215
1-888-485-8216

1-888-495-2292
CODE: NL119

1-888-495-2295
1-888-495-2297

WHAT TO DO IF ALL LINES ARE BUSY

If you are a U.S. resident trying to get the new state \$2 bills within the 7 day deadline and have not been able to reach an operator by calling the special Toll Free Hotline or any of the five Overflow Hotline numbers, follow the steps below.

- 1) Immediately call the Toll Free Hotline number below.
- 2) You will then be connected to a special operator who will ask you for the code number below and arrange delivery of your state \$2 bills.

Call Toll Free: 1-888-509-2680 Code: NL119

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Formal recognition of the wreck took time, but in 2006 – pressured by *Lagarto* families and SUBVETS – the Navy sent USS *Salvor* and a team of divers to confirm that Macleod's find was, in fact, the submarine that disappeared in May 1945. Twin 5-inch gun mounts and "Manitowoc" labeled on the propellers left no doubt.

No Ordinary Wreck. Macleod has visited *Lagarto* several times since the discovery, and speaking to World War II submarine veterans at a convention in Green Bay in September, he says there's now a clear picture of what sank it. Initially, he thought damage to the port bow had only dented the submarine's pressure hull, but reaching underneath the superstructure, Macleod found a large rupture, likely caused by a depth charge. *Lagarto* flooded, quickly.

Also, a starboard torpedo door is open, and the tube is empty, suggesting *Lagarto* fired a torpedo before sinking. Macleod and other experts believe the submarine went down fighting.

Because the bodies of *Lagarto*'s crew lie

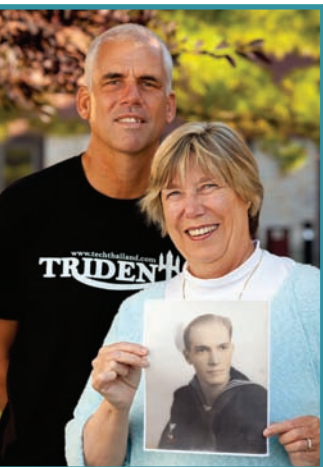
entombed in sealed compartments, the wreck is considered a war grave, and diving activities are subject to Navy permission. Penetration and artifact recovery are prohibited.

Fortunately, *Lagarto*'s location makes frequent diving unlikely, Macleod says. "She's 240 feet deep, and she's 150 miles away from our nearest port. She's not going to be a tourist attraction. Really, it's going to be people interested in precisely what happened to *Lagarto* and helping us do what I call 'gardening' – taking off the ugly nylon nets that drift past and get caught now and again. We do that once or twice a year. I think she's very safe sitting there.

"Also, we keep the coordinates extremely close to our chest. It's only us and the U.S. Navy that know."

As a special guest at the SUBVETS reunion, Macleod met with relatives of *Lagarto*'s crew, who thanked the diver for helping answer questions that have haunted them for decades.

"One lady said to me that she was worried her husband had been taken prisoner and rotted away in a prison camp somewhere," he says. "Another



Jamie Macleod and Nancy Kenney, with a portrait of her father. Mike Roemer

Daughter of *Lagarto* sailor finds peace in discovery

For Nancy Kenney, Memorial Day ceremonies were especially uncomfortable, growing up without her dad. "People would ask, 'What happened to him? Where did he die?' And I didn't know," she says of her father, Signalman 1st Class Bill Mabin of USS *Lagarto*. "He was in a submarine and it went down somewhere in the South Pacific. That's all we knew."

As an adult, she struggled emotionally with his absence. "You realize that you're older than he was when he died, your children are older than he was when he died, and that makes you think about

how much of his life he lost and the things he never got to do," she says. "That's very sad to a child of someone who died in war."

Then the unthinkable happened. A diver found *Lagarto* in the Gulf of Thailand, 240 feet down. Kenney's son, John, called her with the news; he learned of the discovery while searching the Internet for the submarine's name.

Suddenly, Kenney's father, who was declared missing when she was only 2 years old, seemed a lot nearer. At last she was able to mourn.

"I thought, 'OK, we found him. I really want to know this man who is my father,'" says Kenney, a member of American

Legion Auxiliary Unit 1941 in La Grange, Ill. "I pulled out all his letters – he wrote 99 letters to my mother during the war – and I read them. I could see his personality through the letters. I could see what he was like. I could see how much he loved my mother and me."

Still, Kenney had nightmares of what happened to her father and the rest of *Lagarto*'s crew in their final moments. "There's no pretty picture there," she admits. "There's no good way of thinking about it. I think all the family members would say that their worst fear is that they suffered."

Comfort came through conversations with Jamie Macleod, the British diver who discovered *Lagarto*. He has found no evidence that the crew tried to escape the submarine; all the hatches are closed. A hole about 18 feet high and 8 or 9 feet wide on the port side points to a large explosion that would have instantly killed those near it and knocked others unconscious.

Kenney and her family have since become close friends with Macleod. Two of her children, Beth and John, visited the *Lagarto* site and gave Macleod a U.S. flag to fly from the submarine's conning tower. In 2006, he traveled to the United States for a memorial service aboard USS *Cobia*, organized by the Wisconsin Maritime Museum and Kenney.

"*Lagarto* was built in Manitowoc and, in a way, it came back to Manitowoc," she says.

Working with the museum, Kenney has found 72 families of *Lagarto*'s 86-member crew. "We'd like to find them all," she says. "For many of us, it's like a beginning. I have said to Jamie, 'You gave me my father.'"

Military Veterans:

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The symptoms of Tinnitus are real. I had what 1 out of 6 Americans get: the symptoms associated with Tinnitus (*ti-nahy-tuh s*) from loud noises that worsen as you age, and in many cases lead to hearing loss.



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*Shipping and handling non-refundable. QuietRelief.com

thought maybe her husband escaped, met a young Siamese girl and lived on an island the rest of his life. It's important for them to get things squared away."

Other Discoveries. Since *Lagarto*, four other World War II U.S. submarines have been found: *Flier* (SS 250), *Wahoo* (SS 238), *Perch* (SS 176) and *Grunion* (SS 216).

■ On Feb. 1, the Navy confirmed that a diving team with YAP Films, a documentary production company, discovered *Flier* in the Balabac Strait area of the Philippines. Through video footage, Commander Submarine Forces Pacific Fleet (COMSUBPAC) and the Naval Heritage and History Command identified the *Gato*-class submarine, which struck a mine Aug. 13, 1944, and sank.

Fourteen of *Flier*'s 86-man crew escaped, and eight made it to shore. The last surviving crewman, Ens. Al Jacobson, died in 2008. His family assisted in the search for the submarine, and Jacobson's notes helped pinpoint the wreckage.

■ In 2006, Russian divers found *Wahoo* at a depth of 185 feet in the La Perouse Strait, between the islands of Sakhalin, Russia, and Hokkaido, Japan. One of the most famous submarines in World War II, *Wahoo* sank 19 Japanese ships before being attacked and sunk Oct. 11, 1943, with 79 men aboard.

■ A few months after *Wahoo*'s discovery, an international team of divers hoping to photograph the sunken British cruiser *Exeter* accidentally discovered *Perch*, sunk March 3, 1942, in the Java Sea. Two enemy destroyers severely damaged the

'I'D LIKE TO THINK I ADDED A LITTLE BIT TO THE CEREMONY'



Mike Roemer

Joe Maehl

A young trumpeter who had performed with Vaughn Monroe and Jimmy Dorsey, Joe Maehl enlisted in the Navy at 17. He spent much of the war playing bond tours and radio shows before he was sent to Manitowoc, Wis., for a submarine launch.

"The first time a flag goes up on a United States fighting vessel,

then as now, there's a tug," he says. "I was impressed very much, and would like to think I added a little bit to the ceremony."

Maehl played his horn at eight of Manitowoc's 28 submarine launches, including USS *Lagarto*, which later went missing. Sixty-five years later, when the crew's families gathered there for a memorial service, Maehl returned to play "Taps."

In 1944, Maehl was ordered to the Aleutian Islands, where he played in a band attached to an admiral's staff. As a soundman, he instructed Russian sailors in ship operations, seen in the famous "Victory at Sea" film.

"It was the greatest thing that ever happened to me," he says. "Otherwise, I would never have known what the real Navy was about, much less the war."

Joe Maehl is a member of Wisconsin's American Legion Headquarters Post 2930.



Launch of USS *Lagarto* on May 28, 1944. Wisconsin Maritime Museum

Submarine warfare in World War II

70,838 Days U.S. submarines spent on war patrols

14,748 Torpedoes fired by U.S. submarines

1,178 Japanese merchant vessels sunk by U.S. submarines (5,053,491 gross registered tons)

380 U.S. airmen rescued by 86 different submarines

249 U.S. submarines operated in the Pacific

206 Submarines launched in the United States between Dec. 7, 1941 and Labor Day 1945

52 U.S. submarines lost, eight from unknown causes

16 Number of war patrols by USS *Stingray* (SS 186) – a record for U.S. submarines in World War II

7 U.S. submarine commanders who received the Medal of Honor, three posthumously

Source: "Subs Against the Rising Sun," Keith M. Milton (Yucca Tree Press, 2000)

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Porpoise-class submarine in a depth-charge attack. Two days later, on the surface to attempt repairs and unable to dive, *Perch* was fired upon by two Japanese cruisers and three destroyers. The skipper ordered the boat scuttled, and the crew – 54 enlisted men and five officers – was captured. Six died of malnutrition in Japanese prison camps; the rest returned to the United States after the war.

■ The fate of *Grunion* and its 70-man crew was perhaps the greatest mystery. At the SUBVETS reunion in Green Bay, John Fakan, keynote speaker and president of the USS *Cod* Submarine Memorial in Cleveland, recounted the search for the sunken vessel, found in the Bering Sea in 2007. On its first war patrol, *Grunion* was north of Kiska, Alaska, on July 30, 1942, when it reported sinking three Japanese destroyers and encountering heavy antisubmarine activity. The *Gato*-class submarine was ordered back to Dutch Harbor but was not heard from again. It remained on the books for 65 years as missing, cause unknown.

For decades, John, Bruce and Brad Abele sought clues to what happened to *Grunion*, which was commanded by their father, Lt. Cmdr. Mannert “Jim” Abele. In 2002, a Japanese naval historian named Yutaka Iwasaki provided them with an English translation of a Japanese military officer’s report about his merchant ship, the *Kano Maru*, being torpedoed by a U.S. submarine near Kiska. The crew returned fire with two machine guns and a deck cannon, and later claimed that a shell had hit the sub’s conning tower and sunk it.

After researching probable locations for *Grunion*, the Abele brothers hired a Seattle ocean-surveying firm and chartered a crabbing boat with experience sailing the region’s volatile waters. In August 2006, two weeks of sonar scans finally revealed an oblong shape with features that resembled a conning tower and periscope mast.

The Abeles contacted Fakan, whose extensive knowledge of *Cod* – a submarine with blueprints virtually identical to *Grunion*’s – convinced them



‘IF I WAS YOUNGER, I’D DO IT AGAIN’

Real Cyr, USS *Herring*, USS *Croaker*

A native of Quebec, Real Cyr joined the Royal Canadian Navy in 1942, at age 16, and volunteered to be a commando. “I didn’t know what a commando was, but I put my hand up,” Cyr says. “I found out after 16 weeks of rugged training.”



Mike Roemer

Hand-to-hand combat, swimming, parachuting and demolishing buildings were all part of the job – a modern-day Navy SEAL, basically.

Assigned to USS *Herring* (SS 233), Cyr saw action off North Africa before being transferred to the British submarine HMS *Seraph* in the North Sea. There, he and five other commandos were sent on a secret mission to destroy a German battleship in the fjords of Norway.

Their first raid didn’t do enough damage, and London ordered them to finish the job. “We knew that was suicide,” Cyr says. Sure enough, the Germans were in the water waiting. They killed three of Cyr’s friends and took the rest as prisoners. “They wanted to know where our submarine came from. All they got was our name, rank and serial number. We took beatings.”

For four days, Cyr’s captors left him and his fellow commandos tied up in a barn, where they managed to

catch and eat lemmings. The Germans then tried to pry information out of the men by offering them food, booze and women. Silence. They were put on a train they figured was bound for a prison camp.

One of the commandos had a knack for playing dead, and Cyr and his friends used the trick to distract and overpower their German guards. Jumping off the train, they found themselves surrounded by French resistance fighters armed with pitchforks. In Oslo, the commandos had been dressed in German army uniforms, so they had to prove to the French they were the good guys. Cyr’s Royal Canadian Navy tattoo on his forearm turned out to be their salvation.

From there, the commandos were taken to a convent in Lille, where they disguised themselves as nuns to avoid detection. Days later, they met up with the captain of a fishing boat, who gave them hoses to breathe if they needed to hide under piles of dead fish. In four hours, Cyr was back aboard *Seraph*.

“After I was back in good health, I volunteered to go to the South Pacific,” he says. He traveled on a troop transport to Australia, where he joined the crew of USS *Croaker* (SS 246) and went on its last two war patrols.

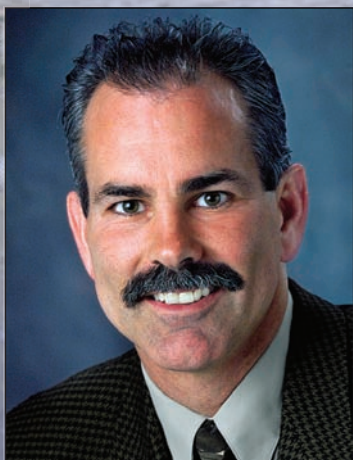
Cyr’s close calls weren’t over. He recalls a time the submarine was at 370 feet, taking dozens of depth charges as a Japanese destroyer crossed overhead. “If you knew any prayers, you remembered them,” he says.

Though he occasionally has nightmares about his time as a POW, Cyr loved life at sea, when he’d kick his boots off and wedge himself between two torpedoes, fully clothed, and go to sleep. “If I was younger, I’d do it all again.”

Real Cyr is a past commander of American Legion Post 5 in Waterville, Maine.

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there was a good likelihood they had located their father's resting place.

"They went back a year later with a remotely operated vehicle using a high-definition video camera, and there's no question it's a submarine," Fakan says.

On Oct. 3, 2008, after examining three hours of underwater video and 700 digital photos, the Navy confirmed that *Grunion* had been found. Extremely cold water and a lack of oxygen have preserved much of the submarine, revealing an open aft-battery hatch and separated bow.

The Abeles posted an analysis of the wreckage online, and input from experts and others in the submarine community has generated a handful of plausible theories as to what sank *Grunion*. The most recent is that a circular dud torpedo hit the periscope shears, not a shell from *Kano Maru*, and that a rear dive plane jammed in the dive position, combined with a disruption, made it impossible for the submarine to blow the forward ballast tanks in time to stop its descent.

What is absolutely certain is that *Grunion* went below crush depth and imploded, skidding down an underwater mountain starting at 2,000 feet and coming to rest at about 3,200 feet.

"Seventy families knew nothing about what happened," Fakan said. "Three women called 'sub ladies' managed to make contact with every one of them, and in October 2008, we conducted a memorial gathering on *Grunion's* sister ship, the *Cod*, in Cleveland." Ohio is the state charged with remembering *Grunion* and its crew.

As for the next World War II submarine to be found – 47 others remain, as submariners say, "on eternal patrol" – it's anybody's guess. But thanks to divers like Macleod and the persistence of families who want closure, it's a more educated guess than ever. 🍷

Matt Grills is managing editor of The American Legion Magazine.

Check out our Web exclusives

Watch video interviews of World War II submarine veterans, see a slideshow of USS *Lagarto* images, and read an interview with Bruce Abele, who led the search for his father's missing submarine, USS *Grunion*.

 www.legion.org/wwiisubmarines



Mike Roemer

'GEEZ, I DIDN'T KNOW THEY LEAKED THIS MUCH'

Tom Massey and Calvin Moon,
USS *Razorback*

Friends for 65 years, Tom Massey and Calvin Moon met on Moon's first day aboard USS *Razorback* (SS 394), when the submarine started flooding.

"They told me to sit on the bunk in the after battery, so I sat down and waited," Moon recalls. "We went out, I heard the diving alarm go off, and all of a sudden the water is pouring in. I thought, 'Geez, I didn't know they leaked this much.'" Still, he could tell you that salt water and batteries didn't mix.

"This kid, Tom Massey, was coming forward out of the engine room. I asked, 'Is this normal?' He yelled and ran up to the control room. We surfaced and went back to Key West." A repair crew had taken some batteries out and put new ones in, but forgot to tighten the bolts on what they called a soft patch: "It was leaking like a sieve," Moon says.

Together, the two friends – both radar operators – saw their share of action. *Razorback* made five combat patrols, sinking two Japanese destroyers, four merchant ships and some smaller enemy vessels. The crew also rescued five U.S. pilots shot down in the Pacific.

Razorback was one of 12 submarines in Tokyo Bay for the surrender. "The day was overcast and cloudy, and suddenly the sun came out and a flight of B-29s went over," Massey says. "We had a radio hooked up on the deck so everybody could hear what was going on. About an hour later, we started getting a broadcast, saying that just as the ceremony started, the clouds broke, the sun came out and a flight of B-29s went over. We were hearing a re-broadcast from Pearl Harbor."

After the war, the two men kept in touch. Moon was in Massey's wedding, and living about 40 miles apart, they still talk once a week.

'IT'S GONNA HIT! IT'S GONNA HIT!'

Roger Brook, USS *Tench*

We had several hits. I'd say less than half of them were submerged attacks. By the time we were in the Pacific, in 1945, there'd been a lot of attrition of Japanese surface vessels. Targets were hard to come by. Lots of times we used deck guns on them. We had a 5-inch deck gun and two 40mm, which were good for anti-aircraft or small vessels. And we had a 20mm deck gun that was anti-aircraft also.

The most frightening thing that happened to us was near the end of our second patrol, in the Inland Sea between the islands of Honshu and Hokkaido. We were going out to the ocean to charge our batteries at night, and we'd come back and get in as close as we could to find ships hugging the shore to get up the coast of Honshu.

On one of these trips we picked up a small convoy during the day in the periscope, and we did a so-called end-around. In other words, we dropped our scope, turned around and headed back out to sea so we were beyond their distance, surfaced, put on several engines to speed ahead of them, then came back in toward shore for an attack later that night. We were coming in, and I picked up the convoy on the SJ radar. We couldn't see them from the bridge at all. The escort, which I believe was a destroyer, was between us and the convoy. We got in closer for a good firing position.

We were on the surface, though we had partially flooded down so we didn't cast too big a silhouette. The skipper was

behind in the conning tower directing the attack. We had an officer up on the bridge, and he hadn't yet seen our contact or the escort. Finally we got in to about 1,200 yards, and he was able to pick up the destroyer on his special field glasses that were in a gimbal ring, so the angle was automatically transmitted down to our data computer.

We set up and fired four fish at the destroyer, and as soon as we fired, the lieutenant called down from the bridge and said, "One is running erratic, rudder jammed to the left." Immediately the skipper put on flank speed and we put on hard rudder to the right to get out of the way. That torpedo kept circling to the left until it was coming right back at us, and all we heard from up on the bridge was, "It's gonna hit! It's gonna hit!"

Fortunately, that torpedo didn't hold its depth properly and went too deep, right beneath our after torpedo room, and we got out of there.



Mike Roemer

'WE WERE PART OF THE CREW AND WE DID OUR JOB'

Hosey Mays, USS *Creville*

"Mays, you look like you'll make a good submariner."

Drafted for military service, Hosey Mays wasn't even sure what a submarine did, but he volunteered anyway and reported to New London, Conn., for training. As a mess attendant, he got orders to USS *Creville* (SS 291), where he was one of two black stewards on board.

"We had bunks in the overhead above the torpedo-loading hatch," he says. "They called it the bridal suite."

His primary duty was taking care of the officers, but on a submarine, no man has just one job. At battle stations, Mays was second loader on the 4-inch deck gun, and when *Creville* shot torpedoes, he was on the reload crew.

Some blacks encountered racism in the ranks. That wasn't Mays' experience.

"We were part of the crew, and we were treated as such," he says. "No N-word or nothing. In my whole Navy career on submarines I never heard that word, and if anything came up, the officers would take care of it. On the beach, when you would go on liberty, that was a different story. You didn't see any of us guys there. Just didn't get the word, I guess. But that's neither here nor there. We were part of the crew, and we did our job."

One of Mays' best memories is walking the plank during the traditional crossing-the-equator ceremony. A sailor stood on the periscope shears with a rifle to ward off sharks. When Mays hit the water, the man fired a couple of rounds. "You want to see some fast swimming," he laughs.

Mays did two war patrols on *Creville*, and two more on *Bowfin* (SS 287). After the war, he stayed in the Navy and on submarines. In 1958, other ratings opened to blacks, and Mays trained to become an interior communications technician. He was aboard *Grenadier* (SS 525) during the Cuban Missile Crisis, when the submarine helped blockade and quarantine the communist island. He retired in 1968, and did five more years in the Navy Reserve for 30 years of service.

Hosey Mays is a member of American Legion Cook-Pinkney Post 141 in Annapolis.



Mike Roemer

NEW TODAY

World famous Amish built fireplace mantles now being given away free

After about a million sold, nearly perfect Scratch-N-Dent models of the world famous Amish built fireplace mantles are now being given away free to the first 11,382 readers who call to beat the order deadline for the miracle heaters that let you turn your furnace off early this year

Slash your Heat Bills: Miracle invention uses only a trickle of electricity, so relax in front of the flameless fire then turn your thermostat way down and with the push of a button get a constant heat wave using about the same energy as a coffee maker and never be cold again

By LAUREN RICH
Universal Media Syndicate

(UMS) If you just got stung with another high heat bill you better hurry and get in on this free giveaway.

Today, for the first time ever beautiful Scratch-N-Dent models of the world famous Heat Surge® Miracle Fireplace mantles are actually being given away free to the general public.

The only thing today's readers need to do is call the Hotline as soon as you read this announcement to order the miracle heaters before they're gone. Everyone who does will instantly be awarded the genuine handmade Amish oak Fireplace mantle absolutely free.

"This is all happening because the Amish craftsmen who have already built nearly a million of these mantles take great pride in their work and we have strict quality control so not all mantles make the final grade," said Chris Gallo, Heat Surge spokesman.

"We think they are way too hard on themselves, but that's how we are able to set aside hundreds of these nearly perfect units to give away free," Gallo said.

"These are the newest Heat Surge Fireless Flame™ Fireplace models. Chances are you will never find the flaw, it could be on the mantle or the firebox, but usually smaller than a thumb nail. Since they get labeled basically new we are giving them away free," Gallo said.

"It's the buzz around town. Yes, the Amish craftsmen need to earn money like every-



■ **PICKY, PICKY:** "If it's not perfect, give them away free," said the elder Amish craftsman. That's why these nearly perfect genuine Amish built fireplace mantles made in the USA are being given away free to the first 11,382 readers who call 1-866-964-4314 to beat the order deadline for the world famous Heat Surge Fireless Flame miracle heaters that can drastically slash your heat bills. The miracle invention rolls from room to room with no chimney, no vents, no wood, no mess and no smoke. Just plug it in and relax in front of the Fireless Flame.

one else but they are willing to take less for their work so that everyone can get one. It shows we care. The overriding goal is to help as many people as possible to substantially cut their heat bills now and next fall by allowing everyone to turn down their thermostat," Gallo said.

As we look forward to enjoying the summer, there will be that monster lurking in the shadows: HIGH HEATING

BILLS. They are again just a few short months away. So if your heat bills sting right now, just think how bad they could hurt next year.

"Giving these away now is about the best way to prepare everyone for what is coming. So if you thought you couldn't afford the World Famous Heat Surge Fireplace, now is the time to get in on this," Gallo said.

"Everyone wants them now

because by next fall, this free giveaway will be long gone," he said.

Don't let anyone talk you into anything else. Those others are just imitations. These are the genuine Amish made Heat Surge Fireplaces that actually roll from room to room to give you the huge savings with zone heating.

A special High-Tech on board computer controls what's called the Fireless

Flame that gives you the peaceful flicker of a real fire but without any flames, fumes, smells, ashes or mess. Everyone is getting them because they require no chimney and no vent. You just plug it in.

The patented *Fireless Flame* looks so real it fools everybody but it has no real fire. The mantles are handmade in the USA right in the heart of Amish country where they

are beautifully hand-rubbed, stained and varnished.

Thousands of people from California and Florida even flock to get them because they may never have to turn on their furnace. And since the standard setting uses only 750 watts, about the same energy as a coffee maker the potential savings are absolutely incredible.

"That way, everyone who

gets them now can immediately start saving on their heat bills. You'll instantly feel bone soothing heat in any room. You will never have to be cold again," he said.

"We'll do everything we can so no one gets left out. But, there are only 11,382 available for this free giveaway of the world famous Heat Surge Fireplace mantle, but you also get the patented

Fireless Flame firebox free of next year's dealer mark up. After they are gone we have to turn everyone away," confirms Gallo.

"So when lines are busy keep trying. We promise to get to every call. Then we will have a delivery truck out to your door right away with your beautiful Amish made Heat Surge Roll-n-Glow® Fireplace," Gallo said. ■

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Free giveaway begins

Readers of this publication simply need to call the Toll Free Hotline beginning at 8:00am as soon as you see this announcement. If lines are busy keep trying, all calls will be answered.

All those who beat the deadline to cover just shipping and the Miracle Heater firebox get them installed in the Free Amish built fireplace mantle.

This nation wide giveaway has a strict limit of two units per household only with a valid free claim code.

This Free giveaway is for only as long as supplies last. Only 11,382 will be given away on a first come first serve basis. When they are gone, they are gone.



1. Choose your Solid Wood Mantle:

A. Country Oak	\$298	NOW FREE
B. Modern Black	\$348	\$48 custom finish fee
C. Classic White	\$348	\$48 custom finish fee
D. Cherry Manor	\$338	\$38 custom finish fee

2. The *Fireless Flame* Miracle Heater Firebox with on Board Computer free of dealer mark up now for just \$249 with FREE Scratch-N-Dent fireplace mantles claimed before the deadline.

3. Your beautiful Heat Surge Roll-n-Glow *Fireless Flame* Fireplace comes fully assembled by Amish craftsmen and gets delivered right to your door. All you do is roll it out of the crate and plug it in.

OH and FL resident transactions require the remittance of applicable sales tax. Sorry no shipments to MA residents.

Miracle invention rolls from room to room with no chimney, no vents, no wood and no smoke



■ **THE BRAINS BEHIND THE BEAUTY:** This is the High Tech computer board that controls the patented *Fireless Flame* technology developed by Asian engineers. Since the Amish don't make the firebox computer, it's the only cost you have to cover because they are giving all of the Scratch-N-Dent Amish built mantles away for free.



■ **EASILY ROLLS ANYWHERE:** This is the Heat Surge Roll-n-Glow® Fireplace that is so portable it easily rolls from bedroom to living room to keep you warm everywhere. No vents, no chimney and no tools. Just plug it in.



■ **SAVE ON BILLS:** Everyone can get low bills and stay warm and cozy. Naomi Abrams' new Heat Surge Roll-n-Glow® Fireplace saves a ton of money and makes her front room look like a million bucks. "It was a surprise from my husband," she said.



■ **SAFE FLAME:** The Heat Surge patented *Fireless Flame* looks so real it fools everyone but there is no real fire. That makes the flame window safe to the touch. It's where the kids will play and the cat and dog will sleep.



Spc. Brendan Marrocco and his platoon at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii. Oliver Koning



In Iraq, 2007.
Courtesy Brendan Marrocco

A New Yorker who lost all four limbs in combat takes a positive attitude down the long road to independence. His first wish, to salute his fellow troops, was fulfilled with help from The American Legion.

A Soldier's Wish

BY KEN OLSEN

Fresh off a week of skiing the champagne powder of Aspen, Colo., Brendan Marrocco is already making arrangements to have a snowboard custom built so he can return to the slopes before the season ends. He's engaged to be married. He's thinking about the automotive business he wants to open when he leaves Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. He's got parachuting, bungee jumping, hiking, biking and all kinds of adventures in mind.

In other words, the 23-year-old soldier from Staten Island, N.Y., is doing everything he would have ordinarily done if an armor-piercing roadside bomb hadn't taken his arms and legs, severed his ceratoid artery and damaged his left eye as he and a small contingent of soldiers returned from a night mission in northern Iraq last Easter.

"The progress he's made is remarkable," says Alex Marrocco, Brendan's father. "I never thought he'd be at this point this quickly."

Brendan also is surprised. "It is truly incredible that the body can heal as quickly as it does," he says. He credits his amazing pace of recovery to two things: unwavering family support and expert care from the medical staff at Walter Reed. "My surgeon is not only an amazing surgeon; he looks out for me."

The combat veteran has lost track of the number of operations he has had since getting hit. His 13th or 14th came after he returned from an American Legion-assisted trip to Hawaii in November, when he welcomed home his brigade. It had been his wish almost from the day he



Maj. Gen. Robert L. Caslen Jr., commander of the 25th Infantry Division, pins the specialist insignia on the chest of Brendan Marrocco. Floyd K. Takeuchi



The recovering soldier from New York takes part in morning physical training with his unit at Schofield Barracks. Members of the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry chanted "Marocco, Marocco, Marocco" during the entire 4-mile run.

Floyd K. Takeuchi

resumed consciousness to stand and salute the soldiers with whom he served.

Soon after he returned from the reunion at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii, Marrocco underwent surgery to remove bone growth in his left leg, caused by the limb's attempt to heal itself, Brendan explains. Removing the growth has made walking far less painful.

There will be more operations on his arms and legs. There's shrapnel to remove from his forehead. And while his family says the surgeries take their toll, Brendan approaches them with humor.

"I'm starting to like them," he says. "With each one, I get better. They fix things. (And) I get to sit in a hospital, and people wait on me. The only thing I won't do – I won't get my wisdom teeth pulled... I don't like getting that shot in my mouth." He grins. For a moment, he can make you believe a shot of Novocain is the most painful thing he can imagine.

"I think his sense of humor goes a long way to making a situation better," his father says. "At times, we find ourselves laughing at the stupidest things."

That approach has carried Brendan throughout his recovery, throughout the challenge of learning to walk again, of mastering different sets of prosthetic arms and legs, of dealing with unending pain.

"He has a lot of fun during his day," says Michael Marrocco, Brendan's older brother and non-medical attendant.

The days are filled with physical therapy – "stretch and walk," Brendan explains. "Next day, stretch and walk some more."

And occupational therapy. "I'm pretty much past 'move this block' – the silly stuff. Now I'm into the stuff you do every day."

And planning his future.

Brendan met his fiancé, Katie Barto, last July while on a beach outing at Breezy Point, N.Y., arranged by the Military Advanced Training Center at Walter Reed. Barto was an intern with Disabled Sports USA. The couple became engaged just before Brendan and Michael went home to Staten Island for 18 days at Christmas.

In January, the brothers headed to Snowmass Ski Area in Colorado, where Brendan mastered a bi-ski – essentially a seat attached to a pair of skis that is guided by both outriggers attached to his arms and Brendan shifting his weight. Michael joined him on a snowboard. The outing was



Brendan jokes with Maj. Gen. Robert L. Caslen Jr. and others after his promotion ceremony in Hawaii.



Brendan, far left, prepares to present medals to the top mono skiers at the Winter X Games in Snowmass, Colo.

Michael Marrocco

ROAD TO RECOVERY

Brendan's family has established a trust to raise money for his housing needs when he is discharged from Walter Reed. The trust will evolve into a foundation to help others. "Brendan has gotten a lot of help along the way," Alex Marrocco says. "We want to give back for all we've been given."

Donations:

✉ **The Brendan Marrocco
Road to Recovery Trust**
P.O. Box 120197
Staten Island, NY 10312



ABOVE: Lt. Col. Raul Gonzalez, commander, 2-27th Battalion, speaks with Marrocco moments after presenting the soldier with his Purple Heart medal. *Floyd K. Takeuchi*

RIGHT: Brendan, his mother Michelle, his father Alex and his brother Michael await the beginning of the ceremony in which Brendan received his Purple Heart. *Oliver Koning*



reminiscent of their boyhood ski trips to Pennsylvania. They attended the Winter X Games in Colorado, and Brendan gave out medals to the top mono skiers. Challenge Aspen, which arranged the trip, is "an amazing program," Brendan says. "And Aspen was so beautiful. The view was spectacular."

In typical fashion, he didn't hold back. "I was skiing very fast," he says with an easy smile. "Anything that could be potentially dangerous to my health, I'm all over."

He's loved fast cars and motorcycles since he was old enough to drive. He modified a Subaru WRX and pushed it to 160 mph before he sold it and joined the Army in 2008. He's now modifying a 2006 Dodge Charger SRT8 with a 425-horsepower Hemi under the hood. His friends were working on it when he was home for Christmas. Next up: installing headers and getting tires to fit the new rims he bought.

It's all about focusing forward.

"He doesn't want to be looked at in terms of his injuries," his father says. "He wants to be defined for the person he was and who he really is now. He's a man with a great sense of humor who has always done things for himself and wants to continue doing them for himself."

"We're confident that if he wants to do something, he will do it. Anytime anyone has told him he couldn't do something, he's usually proven them wrong."

That approach – that attitude – helps others as well. "People who have never met us tell us it changed them," says Brendan's mother, Michelle.



ABOVE: Brendan relaxes after a physical-therapy session at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. **RIGHT:** He learns to use his new legs during therapy at Walter Reed. Courtesy Michael Marrocco



"I believe it's going to be for the better of all of us. I look at him, and I never have a bad day."

Brendan will leave Walter Reed at an undetermined date in the future. It's unclear what level of independence he will have, his father says. "To me, that is the biggest and most troubling unknown. My gut feeling is he will have enough independence that he will be able to live on his own. Recently he told me, 'Don't take this personal, Dad, but I'm not going to live with you for the rest of my life.' How's that for positive thinking?"

Michael, who left an information-technology job with a large banking company to help Brendan, hasn't decided what's next for him. "I have no idea what kind of job I'll go back into," he says. His focus, for the moment, is caring for his brother.

"Michael remains our family's hero," his mother says. "He saved us."

No matter where he goes from here, Brendan also leaves an indelible mark on Walter Reed, the Army and everyone he has encountered. It's obvious just watching the ease with which he interacts with the steady stream of soldiers and civilians who seek him out in the lobby of Mologne House, a hotel at Walter Reed that houses outpatients and their families.

"He is such a positive influence on those around him," says Command Sgt. Maj. Jeff Mellinger, Army Materiel Command. "You cannot help but feel better after spending time with him."

Brendan, meanwhile, pushes the spotlight onto the other men and women who are recovering at Walter Reed. "Pretty much everyone laid up here wants to get back to Iraq and Afghanistan," he says. "They just want to continue to do their jobs on a daily basis. They just want to help." 🌿



The story of Brendan Marrocco's recovery and how The American Legion helped him fulfill his wish was recently presented in a four-part online series. The presentation – in words, photos and video – received numerous reader comments and remains posted under the title "A Soldier's Wish" on the Web site.

 www.legion.org/troops

Ken Olsen is a frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.

SPACE SCUTTLE

Is America surrendering the high ground?

BY ALAN W. DOWD



As it stands now, the United States will retire its fleet of space shuttles – *Discovery*, *Endeavour* and *Atlantis* – this year or next. Once the shuttles are mothballed and shipped off to museums, the United States will have no way of delivering its own into space, at least not for a while. Instead, U.S. astronauts will fly on Russian rockets. The hiatus could last several years.

Americans have largely responded to this alarming news with a been-there-done-that shrug. After all, shuttles have been circling the earth since 1981, Neil Armstrong walked on the moon in 1969, and the Mercury Seven got the U.S. space program off the ground in 1958.

“It’s a very different world now, and it’s unreasonable to expect the same sort of excitement,” John Logsdon of George Washington University’s Space Policy Institute recently observed, referencing the era of U.S.-Soviet space competition.

But whether or not Americans care, shutting down the shuttle program with no replacement at the ready could have a negative impact on America’s international standing and national security.

Unseemly and Dangerous. “The fundamental problem of NASA,” Norman Augustine, chairman of the presidentially-appointed Human Spaceflight Plans Committee, explains, “is that with the budget constraints it’s had on it, it doesn’t have enough money to develop the next-generation system while it continues to operate the current system.”

In other words, a gap between the end of the shuttle and the beginning of its successor program is inevitable. The Bush administration planned to phase out the shuttle program in order to divert resources to the Constellation program, which would carry Americans back to the moon and ultimately to Mars.

Bridging the gap by relying on Russia was always an imperfect workaround. Michael Griffin, NASA administrator under President Bush, called it “unseemly in the extreme” – and understandably so. Under the current contract, the United States is forking over \$780 million through 2011 to purchase seats and space on Russian rockets.

LEFT: At NASA’s Kennedy Space Center in Florida, the space shuttle *Endeavour* sits ready for liftoff in the unlikely event that a rescue is necessary following *Atlantis’* mission to service the Hubble Space Telescope last spring. The shuttle fleet is scheduled to be retired this year. NASA/Dimitri Gerondidakis

But it’s more than unseemly and imperfect. “It is dangerous for the United States to find itself dependent upon any external entity for a strategic capability, and space transportation is just that,” Griffin warned in February 2008. Russia’s blitzkrieg battering of Georgia later that year underscored the danger.

Faced with the worst economic crisis in decades, President Obama was not eager to pour huge sums into continuing the shuttle program beyond 2010 or early 2011. (While it’s possible shuttles will fly in 2011, there are currently no funds for shuttle operations in fiscal 2011.) Although NASA received an extra \$1 billion from the 2009 stimulus package and a bump from Obama’s 2010 budget, there is “a drop-off in money for human spaceflight in the three years starting in 2011,” *The Washington Post* noted.

Moreover, the president’s long-delayed decision to name Griffin’s replacement suggests that space is not going to be a priority. The Associated Press observed that the Obama administration nominated “nearly 200 officials, including an undersecretary of agriculture for rural development, an assistant labor secretary for veterans employment and training, and actor Kal Penn as a White House liaison” before naming Charles Bolden as NASA administrator.

Then in early 2010, the Obama administration announced plans to end the Constellation program and use NASA resources to purchase more outsourced missions and encourage the development of commercial rockets.

Congress may have other ideas. In 2009, Congress explicitly blocked NASA from canceling the Constellation program. And some in Congress have suggested extending the shuttle’s life.

Neglect. “NASA has got Pluto status right now,” Paul Light of New York University told *The Associated Press*. And it has for some time. Indeed, the post-shuttle gap is neither Bush’s nor Obama’s fault, but rather the result of decades of neglect and a confluence of circumstances and events.

One of those events was the *Columbia* disaster of 2003. Pre-*Columbia*, NASA had planned to deploy the shuttle until 2022. The loss of *Columbia* radically altered those plans.

The shuttle’s critics, citing the *Columbia* and *Challenger* disasters, have long argued that it is too expensive and undependable. A prime example is science writer Jeffrey Kluger’s observation that shuttles “cost \$400 million every time they fly, take months to prep for a mission and have a

devastatingly poor safety record, as two lost ships and 14 lost lives attest.”

It’s worth noting, however, that the shuttle program settled into an efficient routine in the years between *Challenger* and *Columbia*. For 17 solid years, to be exact, the shuttle made the miracle of spaceflight so seemingly effortless and ordinary that it became a footnote. Takeoffs weren’t televised, spacewalks weren’t broadcast, and landings weren’t reported. Carrying humans beyond that place where space and sky collide – and back – was just part of what the United States did.

In truth, the space shuttle was, and is, anything but ordinary. It lifts off like a rocket, races around the earth like a satellite, services space stations and telescopes, delivers satellites and sensors, and then glides home on a fountain of fire, before gently touching down like any passenger plane. And somehow it is only the failures – two over 29 years and more than 125 missions – that grab our attention.

Another circumstance contributing to America’s looming retreat from space is the mushrooming costs of homeland security, global military operations, bailouts and economic stimulus packages – costs that were unforeseen a decade ago.

As to Washington’s neglect of NASA, Augustine notes that for decades NASA has been trapped in a situation “where ends don’t match means.” One HSPC member told *The Washington Post* NASA is so cash-strapped that it needs some \$50 billion above its current budget plans.

The blame for the disconnect between NASA’s ends and means rests with policymakers from both parties – and with the American people – for shrugging at the man-made miracle of space flight, for not appreciating the nation’s reliance on space for everyday life, for not investing treasure and talent into space, and for not facing reality.

For instance, transporting people into space and back will never be both risk-free and cheap. Americans and most of their representatives in Washington fail to realize that.

When *Challenger* exploded in 1986, policymakers should have recognized the obvious – that the shuttle was not immortal – and begun building its replacement. Instead, the *Ares I-X* rocket, which was test-launched in October 2009, was the first new crew-capable spacecraft unveiled by NASA in 30 years. The mission-ready variant was supposed to be ready by 2017 but now may never see the launch pad, given that it is part of the Constellation program.

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The old saying, “You get what you pay for” is true. Consider the difference between Washington’s investment in the pre-*Apollo* and the post-*Columbia* NASA.

Today, Washington’s NASA outlay amounts to about 0.5 percent of federal spending. In the early 1960s, it was about 1.1 percent of federal spending. By the time the *Eagle* had landed on the lunar surface, as Derek Leebaert writes in his 2002 book “The Fifty Year Wound: The True Price of America’s Cold War Victory,” the United States was tasking “300,000 workers at around 20,000 companies in all 50 states” on the space program.

However, America’s short attention span soon moved on to something else, and funding for space programs began to wither.

Consequences. Deploying into space isn’t about geopolitical bragging rights nowadays. It’s about maintaining America’s national-security edge, preserving its international standing, and holding the ultimate high ground to tilt the balance in favor of U.S. soldiers, sailors, Marines, airmen and, some day, “aerospace-men.”

To be sure, the Pentagon will continue to be active in space during the gap years without a shuttle. In fact, it is estimated that space programs related to national security receive twice the funding of NASA.

But as Xu Qiliang, commander of China’s air force, has observed, “if you control space, you can also control the land and the sea.” It’s hard to imagine that, during the gap years, the United States will be more capable of controlling space with unmanned satellites and Russian rockets than with Americans deploying into space on U.S. vessels. It pays to recall that many shuttle missions have been strictly military ones, some of them highly classified.

In addition, in a realm beyond yet related to national security, surrendering the ability to carry astronauts into space promises to be a blow to U.S. prestige. As Augustine observes, there are “leadership benefits of being among the world’s space-faring nations.” And there are consequences to not being a space-faring nation.

We’ve been here before, as a nation. Almost six years elapsed between the *Apollo-Soyuz* linkup in 1975 and the United States’ next manned space mission, the maiden voyage of *Columbia*. That period ominously coincided with what is generally considered the nadir of America’s post-World War II power.

The United States does have options.

To get around the shuttle’s safety issues and yet retain its delivery capabilities, Boeing engineer Mike Dahm has suggested flying it without astronauts. “De-man-rate it and fly it autonomous,” he told *The Washington Post*.

While that wouldn’t solve America’s manned-spaceflight gap, it would at least free the United States from dependence on Russia.

Among the alternatives cited by the Human Spaceflight Plans Committee:

- Extend the space shuttle’s lifespan to 2015 “to preserve U.S. capability to launch astronauts into space” and to fully utilize the International Space Station.
- Encourage commercial-sector spacecraft development,
- Develop a heavy-lift vehicle derived from the shuttle program’s infrastructure.
- Invest an additional \$3 billion annually to create “a less constrained budget” to allow for “meaningful human exploration.”

The administration is clearly not interested in the fourth option. However, being a space-faring nation, especially the leading nation in space, costs money.

“It’s clear to me that this nation could afford a strong human spaceflight program,” Augustine told a Senate committee in 2009, noting that Americans spend \$7 billion gambling on the Super Bowl and \$32 billion on movies. “It’s simply a question of priority.”

A Different World. Perhaps the Air Force space program will fill the gap. Perhaps private firms will rise to the occasion. Perhaps Russia will be a reliable partner. But it’s difficult to see much good coming out of this retreat from the high ground.

Consider America’s space standdown from a different perspective. What if, in the midst of exploring, colonizing and securing the New World, Britain – the greatest seafaring power of its day – had decided to mothball its naval fleet and rely on other countries to transport British men and material across the oceans? This much we know: Britain and the world would be very different today.

After America’s self-imposed exile from space is over, the United States and the world – and space – could be very different, as well. 🌿

Alan W. Dowd is a contributing editor for The American Legion Magazine.

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Stealth Jihad

Shariah law dictates worldwide conversion to Islam, whatever it takes.



Ali Ali/Corbis

BY FRANK J. GAFFNEY JR.

For the first time in its history, the United States is trying to wage and win a war without accurately identifying the enemy or its motivations for seeking to destroy us. That oversight defies both common sense and past military experience, and it disarms us in what may be the most decisive theater of this conflict: the battle of ideas.

Such a breakdown may seem incredible to veterans of past military conflicts. Imagine fighting World War II without clarity about Nazism and fascism, or the Cold War without an appreciation of Soviet communism and the threat it posed.

Yet today, the civilian leaders of this country and their senior subordinates – responsible for the U.S. military, the intelligence community, homeland security and federal law enforcement – have systematically failed to fully realize that we once again face a totalitarian ideology bent on our destruction.

That failure is the more worrisome since the current ideological menace is arguably more dangerous than any we have faced in the past, for two reasons. First, its adherents believe their mission of global conquest is divinely inspired. Second, they are here in the United States in significant numbers, not just a threat elsewhere around the world.

What, then, is this ideology? It has been given many names in recent years, including political

Islam, radical Islam, fundamentalist Islam, extremist Islam and Islamofascism. There is, however, a more accurate descriptor – the one its adherents use. They call it “Shariah.”

Perhaps the most important thing to understand about Shariah is that it is authoritative Islam, which presents itself as a complete way of life – cultural, political, military, social and religious, all governed by the same doctrine. In other words, this comprehensive program is not simply the agenda of extremists hunkered down in caves in Afghanistan or Pakistan. Neither can its directives be attributed to deviants hijacking Islam.

Rather, Shariah – which translates from Arabic as “path to God” – is actually binding law. It is taught as such by the most revered sacred texts, traditions, institutions, top academic centers, scholars and leaders of the Islamic faith. Fortunately, hundreds of millions of Muslims around the world do not wish to live under a brutally repressive, woman-demeaning, barbaric and totalitarian program. Such Muslims are potentially our allies, just as those who do adhere to Shariah are our unalterable foes.

The immutability of Shariah-adherent Muslim hostility toward the rest of us derives directly from the central tenet of Shariah: Muslims are explicitly required to seek the triumph of Islam over all other faiths, peoples and governments.

The ultimate objective of Shariah is the establishment of a global Islamic state – Sunni Muslims

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If stealth jihad seems less threatening than terrorism, the objective is exactly the same as that of violent jihad: the subjugation to the House of Islam of all non-Islamic states.

call it “the caliphate” – governed by Shariah. The means by which this political outcome is to be achieved is called “jihad.”

Since 9/11, many Americans have become unhappily acquainted with the terrifying, violent strain of jihad. Under Shariah, violence – often described by non-Muslims as “terrorism” – is the preferred means of securing the spread and dominion of Islam, as it is the most efficient.

While Shariah deems jihad to be the personal obligation of every faithful Muslim capable of performing it – man or woman, young or old – they can forgo the violent form when it is deemed impracticable. In such circumstances, the struggle can be pursued through means that are, at least temporarily, non-violent. Taken together, the latter constitute what renowned author and expert Robert Spencer calls “stealth jihad.” Adherents to Shariah call it “dawah.”

Examples of stealth jihadism abound in Western societies, notably Europe and increasingly in the United States. They include the demand for symbolic and substantive accommodations in political, economic and legal areas (for example, special treatment or rights for Muslims in the workplace, in public spaces and by government); the opportunity to penetrate and influence operations against government at every level; and the insinuation of the Trojan horse of “Shariah-compliant finance” into the West’s capital markets.

If stealth jihad seems less threatening than terrorism, the objective is exactly the same as that of violent jihad: the subjugation to the Dar al-Islam (House of Islam) of all non-Islamic states that, like the United States, make up the Dar al-harb (House of War). It follows that those who seek ostensibly to impose Shariah through non-violent techniques – notably in the West, the organization known as the Muslim Brotherhood – are our enemies every bit as much as those who overtly strive to defeat us by murderous terrorism.

Many Western elites, including the Obama

administration, have been seduced by the seemingly benign quality of the Muslim Brotherhood. In fact, we know from the 2008 prosecution of the Holy Land Foundation – the largest terrorism-financing trial in U.S. history – that the Muslim Brothers’ mission in the United States is “a kind of grand jihad to destroy Western civilization from within ... by their own miserable hands.”

Another Brotherhood document, titled “The Rulers,” was seized in a 2004 raid and describes how the organization will try to overthrow the U.S. Constitution in five phases:

- Phase I: Discreet and secret establishment of elite leadership
- Phase II: Gradual appearance on the public scene, and exercising and utilizing various public activities
- Phase III: Escalation, prior to conflict and confrontation with the rulers, through the mass media
- Phase IV: Open public confrontation with the government through the exercise of political pressure
- Phase V: Seizing power to establish an Islamic nation, under which all parties and Islamic groups will become united

“The Rulers” makes plain that all the above-mentioned phases “are preliminary steps to reach the (fifth) phase.”

The Muslim Brothers know that by masking their ideological agenda as a religious program, they can use Western civil liberties and tolerance as weapons in their stealthy jihad. For this strategy to succeed, however, they must suppress any discussion or understanding of the true nature of Shariah.

Adherents to Shariah insist that their law prohibits any slander against Islam or Muhammad. Under such a catch-all restriction, virtually any kind of conversation about – or *critique of* – Islam can be considered impermissible if Muslims find it offensive. Particularly in Europe, the ever-present prospect of violence, like that which followed the September 2005 publication of Danish cartoons poking fun at Muhammad, is generally sufficient to induce self-censorship.

In this country, the application of such prohibitions seems unthinkable, given the guarantees of free speech enshrined in the Constitution’s First Amendment. Unfortunately, the Obama administration last year co-sponsored with Egypt a relevant and deeply problematic resolution in the U.N. Human Rights Council, promoted for years by the Organization of the Islamic Conference



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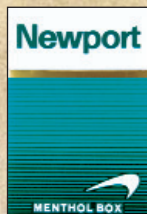
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(OIC), a group of 57 Muslim-majority nations that stridently embraces Shariah and seeks to legitimate and promote its advance around the world.

The resolution calls on members of the United Nations to prohibit statements that offend Islam. It also calls for criminal penalties to be applied to those who make such statements.

The U.S. implementation of such a resolution would obviously be a matter not just for the executive branch, which supported it, but for Congress and the judiciary as well. It is a safe bet that any formal effort to supplant the First Amendment in this way would meet with great resistance.

To a stunning degree, U.S. leaders have been effectively conforming to Shariah slander laws for some time now. For instance, presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama have both repeatedly described Islam as a “religion of peace,” without acknowledging the requirement for jihad its authorities demand, pursuant to Shariah.

At the Muslim Brotherhood’s insistence, the Department of Homeland Security and the State Department have barred the use of perfectly accurate terms like “Islamic terrorism.” The U.S. government has also

embraced the Muslim Brothers’ disinformation by translating jihad as nothing more than “striving in the path of God.”

Under the Bush and Obama administrations, the favored name for the enemy has been “violent extremism” – a formulation that neither offers clarity about the true nature of our foe nor lends itself to a prescription for a successful countervailing strategy. Even when al-Qaeda is identified as the enemy, it is almost always accompanied by an assurance that its operatives and allies have “corrupted” Islam. Ignored, or at least earnestly obscured, are two unhappy realities: such enemies are implementing Shariah’s dictates to the letter of the law, and they have millions of fellow adherents around the world who view Islam’s requirements the same way.

One of the most egregious examples of this practice of unilateral disarmament in the battle of ideas is the January report of the independent review of the Fort Hood massacre, co-chaired by former Army Secretary Togo West and former Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vernon Clark.

Their 86-page unclassified analysis purported to dissect an event allegedly perpetrated by Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan – a medical officer whose business card described him as “Soldier of Allah,” whose briefings justified murder of his comrades in the name of jihad, and who shouted the Islamic martyr’s cry “Allahu Akbar!” (“God is great!”) as he opened fire, killing 13. Incredibly, the words “Islam,” “Islamic terror,” “Shariah,” “jihad,” and “Muslim Brotherhood” were not used even once in the West-Clark report.

Such political correctness, or willful blindness up the chain of command, doubtless caused Hasan’s colleagues to keep silent about his alarming beliefs, lest they be punished for expressing concerns about them. Now, reportedly, six of them have been designated as the scapegoats for what is manifestly an institutional failure.

The painful truth is that however we rationalize

this sort of behavior, our Shariah-adherent enemies correctly perceive it as evidence of submission, which is the literal meaning of the word “Islam,” and what Shariah demands of everyone, Muslim and non-Muslim alike.

Indeed, Shariah offers non-believers only three choices: conversion to

Islam, submission (known as *dhimmitude*) or death. Historically, *dhimmitude* was imposed through successful Muslim conquests. In more recent years, tolerant Western nations have increasingly succumbed to stealthy jihadism, backed by more or less direct threats of violence.

That trend, worrying as it is, may be giving way in this country to a new campaign: jihad of the sword. The past year saw a fourfold increase in the number of actual or attempted terrorist attacks in the United States. Sadly, that statistic will likely be surpassed in the year ahead. Four of the nation’s top intelligence officials have testified before Congress that it is certain new acts of violence will be undertaken in the next three to six months. Worse yet, a blue-ribbon commission has calculated that the probability of the use of weapons of mass destruction somewhere in the world by 2013 is now over 50 percent.

Is this dramatic upsurge in violent jihad directed at the United States unrelated to our behavior? Or does it reflect a growing calculation on the part of our Shariah-adherent enemies that violence

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against the United States is now, once again, practicable?

Either way, the time has clearly come to make a far more serious effort to defeat both the violent and stealthy forms of jihad being waged against this country. If we are to do so, however, we have to start by telling the truth.

Our enemy is not “violent extremism,” or even al-Qaeda alone. Rather, it is the millions of Muslims who – like the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qaeda and their allies – adhere to Shariah and who, therefore, believe they must impose it on the rest of us.

We are at war with such individuals and organizations. Not because we want to be. Not because of policies toward Israel or the Middle East or anything else we have pursued in recent years. Rather, we are at war with them because they must wage jihad against us, pursuant to the

Shariah demands the destruction of democratic nations like the United States. It would supplant them with a repressive, transnational, theocratic government abroad and at home.

dictates of Shariah, the same law that has guided many in Islam for some 1,200 years.

What is at stake in this war? Look no further than The American Legion’s Americanism Manual, which defines Americanism as “love of America; loyalty to her institutions as the best yet devised by man to secure life, liberty, individual dignity and happiness; and the willingness to defend our country and Flag against all enemies, foreign and domestic.”

Such values cannot coexist with Shariah, which demands the destruction of democratic nations like the United States, its governing institutions and liberties. Shariah would supplant them with a repressive, transnational, theocratic government abroad and at home.

The extraordinary reality is that none of this – the authoritative and malevolent nature of Shariah, its utter incompatibility with our civilization, and its adherents’ determination to force us to convert, submit or die – is concealed from those willing to learn the truth. To the contrary, the facts are widely available via books, the Internet, DVDs and mosques, both here and overseas. Interestingly, on

Dec. 1, 2005, Gen. Peter Pace, then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called on his troops to expose themselves to precisely this sort of information: “I say you need to get out and read what our enemies have said. Remember Hitler. Remember he wrote ‘Mein Kampf.’ He said in writing exactly what his plan was, and we collectively ignored that to our great detriment. Now, our enemies have said publicly on film, on the Internet, their goal is to destroy our way of life. No equivocation on their part.”

As it happens, Maj. Stephen Coughlin, a lawyer and Army Reserves intelligence specialist recruited by the Joint Chiefs to be their expert on the doctrine and jurisprudence of jihad, took Pace’s admonition to heart. He wrote a master’s thesis inspired by the chairman’s quote, titled “To Our Great Detriment: Ignoring What Extremists Say About Jihad.”

Coughlin’s briefings explicitly and repeatedly warned military leaders of the enemy’s “threat doctrine” – drawing from, among Islamic texts, passages the Fort Hood suspect used to justify his massacre. Unfortunately, engaging in such analysis, let alone acting on it, was powerfully discouraged in January 2008 when Coughlin was dismissed from the Joint Staff after he ran afoul of a Muslim Brother then working for Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England.

In short, we are today confronted by the cumulative effect of a sustained and collective dereliction of duty, one that is putting our country in extreme peril. Our armed forces – like their counterparts in the intelligence community, Department of Homeland Security and law enforcement – have a professional duty to know the enemy and develop appropriate responses to the threat doctrine. If this dereliction is allowed to persist, it is predictable that more Americans will die, both on foreign battlefields and at home.

The American people also need to become knowledgeable about the threat of Shariah and insist that action be taken at federal, state and local levels to keep our country Shariah-free. This toxic ideology, if left unchecked, can destroy the country and institutions that are, indeed, “the best yet devised by man to secure life, liberty, individual dignity and happiness.” 🌿

Frank J. Gaffney Jr. is president of the Center for Security Policy in Washington and host of the nationally syndicated program “Secure Freedom Radio.”

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Conrad Hilton

Hotel entrepreneur served in the Quartermaster Corps.

The legacy of Conrad Hilton conjures up images of fame, high-end hotels and all the wealth of an upper-class, socialite lifestyle.

But a look at 1919 finds a more modest World War I veteran.

Just back from his tour of duty, Lt. Conrad Nicholson Hilton needed a place to stay. He found the only bed in town, a couch in the lobby of the Mobley Hotel in tiny Cisco, Texas. With visions of a great opportunity, he immediately bought the Mobley, calling it a "cross between a flophouse and a gold mine." From his \$40,000 investment in the 60-room hotel, he earned \$1 to \$2.50 nightly per occupied room. He figured out that he could fast-track the American Dream by renting rooms to local oil-field workers in eight-hour shifts. The Hilton empire was born.

Other veterans had visions that year, too. They united to found The American Legion to serve all those returning home to look for work and resume their pre-war lives.

Entrepreneur "Connie" Hilton was among them. On the heels of his service in the Quartermaster Corps of the American Expeditionary Force, he became a charter member of Post 58 in El Paso, Texas, where he hung his hat until his death in 1979 at age 91.

In between, Hilton grew his empire one hotel at a time – first in Texas, then across the nation and globe. Like other Americans, the Great Depression dealt him a financial blow. However, he obtained a loan, still directed some of his hotels and later retained control over many of them.

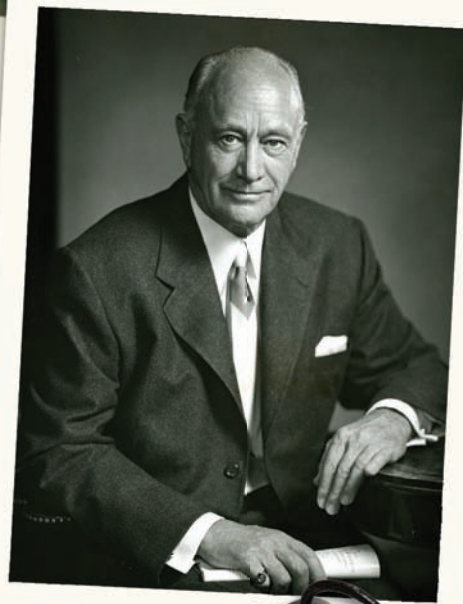
Hilton's personal life was peppered with high-profile marriages and a flamboyant lifestyle, but he made room for philanthropy, forming the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation in 1944.

When approached in August 1969 about training students for the hotel industry, Hilton quickly pledged \$1.5 million. The next month, classes were under way at the Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management at the University of Houston.

Reflecting on Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon earlier that year, Hilton told the first class of students: "And for me, the promise of hotels as an industry is far beyond the horizon of the moon. That is why I am making this gift to the university, to see that there are young men and women prepared to reach that horizon and beyond." The foundation has also benefited the Hilton Center for Business at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles and the Mayo Clinic, along with the needs of children and the poor.

Throughout his career, Hilton didn't forget his American Legion roots. In the 1960s, he wrote: "The World War I veterans who founded The American Legion created not just an organization of veterans, but a vigorous defender of basic American principles of justice, freedom and equality of opportunity. I am proud to have been a charter member of my post."

– Paul Fedorchak



The dossier

Born in pre-statehood New Mexico on Christmas Day 1887.

Served in the New Mexico House of Representatives, 1912-1914.

Bought his first hotel in Cisco, Texas, in 1919.

Married Mary Adelaide Barron, with whom he had three sons: Conrad Nicholson "Nicky" Hilton, Jr., William Barron Hilton and Eric Michael Hilton. Divorced in 1934.

Married Zsa Zsa Gabor, with whom he had a daughter: Constance Francesca Hilton. Divorced in 1946.

Married Mary Frances Kelly, who became his widow.

Employed 10,000 people across the country by 1947.

Formed Hilton International Co. in 1948.

Published his autobiography, "Be My Guest," in 1957.

Died in Santa Monica, Calif., on Jan. 3, 1979.

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With the release of the dynamic new **Compendium**, those boxy, plastic wrist calculators of the past have been replaced by this luxurious LCD chronograph that is sophisticated enough for a formal evening out, but rugged and tough

enough to feel at home in a cockpit, camping expedition or covert mission.

The watch's extraordinary dial seamlessly blends an analog watch face with a stylish digital display. Three super-bright luminous hands keep time along the inner dial, while a trio of circular LCD windows track the hour, minutes and seconds. An eye-catching digital semi-circle animates in time with the second hand and shows the day of the week. The watch also features a rotating bezel, stopwatch and alarm functions and blue, electro-luminescence backlight. The **Compendium Hybrid** secures with a rugged stainless steel band and is water-resistant to 3 ATMs.

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[TROOP SUPPORT]

21st-Century Pinup Girl

California post sponsors model to raise money for VA, DoD hospitals.

Since 2007, Gina Elise has raised tens of thousands of dollars for military and VA hospitals in the western United States through sales of her “pinup-girl” calendars, posters and T-shirts – \$5,000 for the VA medical center in Loma Linda, Calif.; \$15,000 for the naval hospital in San Diego; and \$15,000 for the VA medical center in Portland, Ore.

With a background in theater and a nostalgic appreciation for Betty Grable and other World War II-era pinup girls, Elise decided the best way she could raise funds for wounded warriors was by hearkening back to the days of Grable, Lauren Bacall, Ingrid Bergman and Jane Greer and becoming a 21st-century pinup girl herself. American Legion Post 360 in Lake Arrowhead, Calif., sponsored her efforts, and soon she was off and posing.

She recently spoke with *The American Legion Magazine*.

Q: How is your pinup-calendar project going?

A: The project started in June 2006 and has raised more than \$35,000 for VA and military hospitals. When people go to our Web site, they can order calendars for themselves, for hospitalized veterans, or for someone who is deployed overseas. All of the donated calendars for hospitalized veterans, I take them and travel across the United States, personally delivering them to our injured veterans recovering in military and VA hospitals. I also send thousands to units all over the world, to boost morale.

Q: What kind of reception do you get when you deliver calendars in person?

A: I could write a book from my experiences. A lot of times you’ve got recovering troops who just don’t get visitors. So they’re lying in bed all day without much stimulation, so when I come in – and I always come into the hospital dressed up in my pinup outfits, with a big smile – I think they’re a little bit shocked! They usually have no idea that I’m coming in, so I’ll go in and introduce myself and tell them what the project is about, then ask them to tell me about themselves.

One of the best stories I have is when I was in the San Diego VA hospital. I was talking to this man, and he was answering my questions, but very quietly. Then I walked out of the room, and the nurses rushed up to me and just could not believe it. They told me the man had suffered a traumatic brain injury, and it was the first time he’d spoken in a month.

Q: How did you decide to start raising money for our wounded troops by becoming a pinup girl?

A: In 2006, we were hearing stories about wounded vets coming back to hospitals in the United States that were underfunded and couldn’t properly care for them. I thought, “If anyone should have proper care, it should be our veterans.” They’re putting our country before their own lives, so why aren’t they getting the care they deserve? I thought I needed to do something about it.

I’ve always been a big fan of the whole pinup-girl era – Betty Grable and all the others. People do fundraisers all the time by selling calendars. So I thought it was the perfect idea for me to do a pinup calendar and give the proceeds to military hospitals. It’s kind of a tribute to the period when my grandfather was in uniform. He was a World War II Army vet.

Q: What’s involved in taking of all the photographs, in various costumes?

A: Because my background is in theater, I have a lot of friends who are designers, photographers, stylists, things like that. And I’ve kind of pulled together all my friends, and we schedule these photo shoots. In the past, I’ve done a lot of location scouting: military planes and vehicles. It takes months and months of pre-production.

I do have a team of makeup artists, a photographer, a Web site designer. We work together to produce the actual calendar, and my friends think it’s a great project. It’s already won numerous awards and been featured on different news networks. I’ve even gotten U.S. flags from seven different units in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Q: You’ve been connected to The American Legion for some time now, haven’t you?

A: Oh, yes. When I was in high school, there was an American Legion post – 360 – up in Lake Arrowhead, where I grew up. I had applied for a college



To purchase a calendar:  www.pinupsforvets.com

scholarship, and they gave me one. I ended up graduating from UCLA, and I was always so thankful to them. Then, when I came up with the pinup-girl project, I spoke with the post commander, and he was really gung-ho about it. The first two calendars, for 2007 and 2008, were sponsored by Post 360, and that made it easier to get donations. I mean, I was just this girl in California saying, "Hey, I want to raise money for these rehab programs for vets and troops." But when my Web site and calendars said, "Sponsored by American Legion Post 360," it made it a lot more credible.

I am forever grateful to Post 360's former commander, Nick Nerio, who believed in my project from the very beginning and was willing to get behind my idea to support this fundraiser for ill and injured veterans.

Q: Do you ever hear that what you're doing is somehow inappropriate or politically incorrect?

A: I can count on one hand the number of negative letters I've gotten, compared to thousands of e-mails that support my project. People see this as a really fun cause they can support. So many wives and girlfriends support my project, too. It's a very tasteful calendar, really – bathing suits and fun costumes. Nothing too provocative. I have so many amazing e-mails from veterans and our troops serving overseas, thanking me for what I'm doing.

– Philip M. Callaghan



Courtesy Gina Elise

[VERBATIM]

“I want the Americans to take over the country. The Haitian government can't do anything for us. When we tell the government we're hungry, the government says, 'We're hungry, too.'”

Jean-Louis Geffrard, a Haitian laborer left homeless after the Jan. 12 earthquake that devastated the island nation

“Once you've placed it in a place like White Plains, you've made the city an automatic target, and everything located in it.”

White Plains, N.Y., Mayor Adam T. Bradley, on the possibility of 9/11 terrorism suspects' trials taking place in his city's federal courthouse

“I hope you can sense ... this is of serious concern to me and the other commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan because it can indeed create a perception that is absolutely contrary to what it is that we have sought to do.”

Gen. David Petraeus, commander of U.S. Central Command, on Bible references inscribed on rifle sights manufactured by Michigan-based Trijicon, Inc., and used by soldiers and Marines in Iraq and Afghanistan. The company voluntarily agreed to stop putting Scripture references on products used by the U.S. military and will provide modification kits for products already deployed.

“In dealing with terrorists, our tax dollars should pay for weapons to stop them, not lawyers to defend them.”

U.S. Sen. Scott Brown, R-Mass.

“When I first arrived here, Earth-centered cadets didn't have anywhere to call home. Now, they meet every Monday night, they get to go on retreats, and they have a stone circle.”

Sgt. Robert Longcrier, lay leader of neo-pagan groups at the Air Force Academy in Colorado, on the school's official dedication of an outdoor prayer circle in March

“It's beautiful, beautiful to be old and still be in love at our age.”

Mattie Atkins, 103, who celebrated 80 years of marriage to her husband, Mitchell Atkins, 97, in Philadelphia on Jan. 14

Source: The Washington Post, The New York Times, CNN, Fox News, Philly.com

[LEGIONNAIRES IN ACTION]

Letter prompts Walmart to delay fireworks sale

On Nov. 19, 2009, Walmart's senior manager of executive communications sent American Legion Post 378 in Gulf Breeze, Fla., a letter that elicited applause from Legionnaires and veterans nationwide. Starting in 2010, Walmart stores in the United States will discontinue the sale of fireworks until after Memorial Day.

"Somehow, the true meaning of Memorial Day has gotten lost in all the backyard barbecues, beach parties and sales," says Mike Esmond, Post 378's Americanism chairman. "It's a day to honor veterans' memories, not celebrate their deaths."

Esmond wasn't aware that Walmart sold fireworks on Memorial Day until last May. He immediately resumed a letter-writing campaign that he started back in 2002 in response to a local Winn-Dixie's sale of fireworks on Memorial Day.

The thought of fireworks being sold on a day devoted to honoring and remembering the sacrifice of the nation's fallen servicemembers inspired Esmond and his fellow Legionnaires to write letters in the hope of changing how Americans regard the holiday. Their persistence paid off when Winn-Dixie agreed to discontinue selling fireworks on Memorial Day, but for that year only.

"We had won the battle, but not the war," Esmond said. In 2009, he chose a new and bigger target: Walmart.

Starting last May, Legionnaires sent letters urging Walmart managers to discontinue selling fireworks on a day when Americans should be "honoring the men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice to protect this great nation, and not celebrating their

deaths," Esmond said. Seven months later, Walmart changed its policy.

"I jumped up out of my chair with excitement, and then I sat down and cried, because I knew I was holding in my hands a letter that would make a difference in changing the mindset of a lot of Americans in the way they think about Memorial Day," Esmond said.

"For six months, I have gone around to posts asking them to write letters to condemn Walmart for selling fireworks. Now I'm going back asking them to write letters complimenting Walmart."

Legionnaires and others wishing to thank Walmart can address letters to **Robert Morlino, Senior Manager, Executive Communications, Walmart, Inc., 702 S.W. 8th St., Bentonville, AR 72716.**



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[NATIONAL CONVENTION]

Color guards, bands invited to compete at 92nd National Convention

All American Legion color guards and bands are invited to participate in competition at the 92nd National Convention in Milwaukee on Aug. 28. Contests have four classes for color guards and, for the first time, two classes for bands: competitive concert and exhibition concert.

For contest entry forms and rules, contact the Convention and Meetings Office at (317) 630-1292 or visit its Web site:

www.legion.org/convention/resources

Exhibit Hall

Show dates for the exhibit hall are Friday, Aug. 27 through Tuesday, Aug. 31, in the Midwest Airlines Center, Hall D, Upper Level. Times are 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily

except Sunday and Tuesday, when it closes at 2 p.m. New this year in the exhibit hall is a live webcam, so Legionnaires can say hello to friends and family back home.

Room is limited this year, so reserve exhibit space soon by calling the Convention & Meetings Office at (317) 630-1292 or visiting its Web site:

www.legion.org/convention/resources



Convention competition will include four classes for color guards and two classes for bands. James V. Carroll

[ONLINE]

ORATORICALS LIVE

The final round of The American Legion National Oratorical Contest will be streamed live on the Web from Indianapolis on April 11, beginning at 10 a.m.

 www.legion.org

Registration is happening online for the **2010**

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[TROOP SUPPORT]

Blue Star Salute delivers \$11,000 to Legion

Each year, the Indiana Blue Star Salute raises funds to provide support to military families throughout the Midwest.

In 2009, the Salute's fourth year, more than 1,000 families were honored in ceremonies at O'Reilly Raceway Park in Clermont, Ind. One of the nation's largest events to honor and recognize military families, it raised \$11,000 for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship fund, which ensures children of U.S. military personnel who died on or after Sept. 11, 2001, have an opportunity to pursue higher learning.

Last year, more than 1,500 Legion Riders helped raise donations and awareness for the Legacy Scholarship by participating in a Ride for the Salute.



James V. Carroll

Ralph "Zoc" Zoccolillo of Avon, Ind., Blue Star Salute chairman, said the goal for 2010 is to involve at least 1,500 Legion Riders and honor even more families.

The fifth annual Indiana Blue Star Salute is scheduled for June 19 at Stout Field National Guard Armory in Indianapolis. Military leaders, American

Legion dignitaries and elected officials will speak at the event, and a special presentation will honor Gold Star families, whose loved ones have paid the ultimate price. The Indiana Blue Star Salute will also include booths staffed by military-supporting businesses and organizations, military vehicles and aircraft, parachutists and children's activities. Country singer Michael Peterson will

perform. Financial contributions are provided by businesses and major sports teams, including the Indianapolis Colts, the Indiana Pacers and Alliance Motorsports.

Learn more about the Blue Star Salute:

 www.indianabluestar.org

[LIBRARY]

Enjoy a virtual tour of Legion museum

Members of The American Legion family now have the opportunity to view from the comfort of their homes a selection of pieces from the Emil A. Blackmore Museum at The American Legion's National Headquarters.

A virtual tour of the museum is available at www.legion.org/virtualtour. There, The American Legion Library staff has selected an array of items, with attention to both visual appeal and each one's showcasing of an aspect of the Legion's legacy. The organization's history is illustrated by such items as the gavel and block used to preside over the first national convention in Minneapolis in 1919, the wars Legionnaires have fought in by such items as a captured Viet Cong AK-47, and Legion programs and causes by such items as a promotional bat from the 1965 American Legion World Series, played in Aberdeen, S.D.

The tour also offers a few sights not on display in the museum. A statue of St. Michael the Archangel, sheathing his sword as a sign of the ending of God's wrath through a plague upon Rome, was presented to the Legion at the third national convention in Kansas City, Mo., by Gen. Armando Diaz, head of Italy's military forces in World War I. The Italian inscription reads: "To The American Legion and to its officials



James V. Carroll

and members, who fought with valor on the bloody battlefields of the Great War at the side of the soldiers of Italy. With affectionate memory of comradeship. General Diaz, Rome, October 1921." The appearance of St. Michael in Rome symbolizes the U.S. entry into the war. Due to its age and condition, the statue is currently in storage.

Emil A. Blackmore served as the Legion's national adjutant from 1956 to 1967. Shortly after his death, the National Executive Committee passed a resolution naming the museum after Blackmore, in recognition of his personal interest in the project.

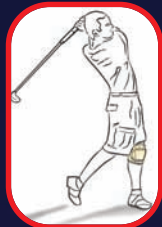
Those interested in visiting the museum in person are welcome to visit National Headquarters in Indianapolis. Hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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[ECONOMICS]

Promote veteran businesses through community outreach

Every successful veteran-owned business I know has one thing in common: a core policy of offering assistance to other veteran companies.

You might think that because they're successful, they now have the time and freedom to offer assistance



to others, but it's been my experience that exactly the opposite is true. They were all willing to coach, mentor and assist other veteran

business owners from the beginning, putting them in places and providing opportunities they never would have found sitting behind their desks.

Helping other veteran businesses does more than just make you feel good. It creates a force multiplier for your company that you couldn't duplicate with even the most robust marketing budget. Being active in the community results in increased contacts, assets, resources, industry information and opportunities.

While social networking sites like MyVetWork, LinkedIn and Facebook make it easy to collaborate online, there is no substitute for belly-to-belly interaction. When you attend conferences, join organizations and get involved, you are guaranteed to see your opportunities increase in a way you never would have expected.

So don't skip that next community meeting or conference because the business of running your business got in the way. You owe it to your company to make time to get involved, and the easiest way is to extend a helping hand to a vet who is trying to follow the trail you blazed.

Louis J. Celli Jr. is CEO of the Northeast Veterans Business Resource Center. Readers can send questions for "On Point" to lcelli@nevbrc.org.

[ECONOMICS]

Take this job

In its latest survey of U.S. workers, the Conference Board, a business and management association, finds that just 45 percent of Americans are satisfied with their jobs – the lowest percentage ever recorded in the survey's 22-year history. The exhaustive survey includes 5,000 U.S. households.

In 2008, 49 percent reported satisfaction with their work. In 1987, when the first survey was conducted, 61 percent were satisfied with their work. Not coincidentally, the percentage of Americans who find their work interesting has fallen from 70 percent in 1987 to 51 percent in the latest survey.

The overall trend for job satisfaction is down and appears to be disconnected from economic cycles: 61 percent satisfied in 1987, 58 percent in 1995, 50 percent in 2000, 52 percent in 2005 and 25 percent in 2009.

In addition, the Conference Board reports that 22 percent of respondents said they don't expect to be in their current job next year.

"Widespread job dissatisfaction negatively affects employee behavior and retention," says John Gibbons, program director of employee engagement research and services at the Conference Board.

 www.conference-board.org



[ECONOMICS]

Trade troubles

The U.S.-South Korea Free Trade Agreement is languishing, even though the deal would expand U.S. exports by as much as \$10 billion annually.

Worse, as the United States drags its feet on finalizing the deal with its longtime ally, the European Union has swooped in to ink an agreement with South Korea that is nearly identical to the U.S. pact. Canada is also negotiating a trade deal with the country.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates that "failure to implement the U.S.-Korea FTA while our trading partners go forward with their FTAs with Korea would lead to a decline of \$35.1 billion in U.S. exports of goods and services to the world" and a net negative impact on U.S. employment of 345,017 jobs.

[EDUCATION]

VA may withhold additional funds until advance repaid



Q: *I attended Boston University during the fall term and never received my Chapter 33 Veterans educational payment, so I decided to take the advance payment of \$3,000 offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs to assist with my college expenses. Can you tell me when VA will ask for repayment?*

A: Although VA has not given direction on how it will recoup the funds, traditionally the procedure has been to not release additional money to you until

the advance has been accounted for. If you received advance pay, be aware that your monthly allowance may not come to you until the entire \$3,000 has been repaid.

Valerie Vigil, a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Arizona, is a past vice president of the National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators. Send GI Bill questions to her by e-mail. askvalerie@legion.org

[ECONOMICS]

83

Percent of Americans who believe higher taxes pose a high or

medium threat to economic performance in the United States in the next two years (Bloomberg)

56

Percent of Americans who are unwilling to pay more in taxes to

reduce the federal budget deficit (CBS/New York Times)

[LANGUAGE]

Forgettable lines

Lake Superior State University in northern Michigan has compiled and released its 35th annual "List of Words Banished from the Queen's English for Misuse, Overuse and General Uselessness."

The no-no list of popular words and phrases includes:

Shovel-ready

Transparent/transparency

Czar

Tweet

App

Sexting

Friend, as a verb

Teachable moment

In these economic times ...

Stimulus

Toxic assets

Too big to fail

Bromance

Chillaxin'

Obama, as a prefix (as in "ObamaCare")

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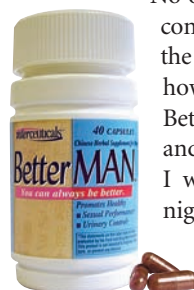


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[LEGION RACING]



Driver Jerick Johnson looks at the 91 car, on the track, from the infield after it sheared the nose off his 76 Freedom Car during the final night of week-long competition in the World Series of Asphalt Stockcar Racing at New Smyrna Speedway near Daytona, Fla. James V. Carroll

Daytona a roller coaster for 76 Freedom Car team

Daytona International Speedway was not so kind to driver Jerick Johnson and The American Legion/David Law Firm 76 Freedom Car as the 2010 racing season began in February.

Johnson and the Team Johnson Motorsports crew arrived in Daytona for Speedweeks confident they had a machine capable of grabbing a spot in the starting grid of the Lucas Oil Slick Mist 200 at the famed speedway. In practice, Johnson finished 28th fastest in a field of more than 50 cars.

Qualification day, however, brought shock. Johnson's qualification speed was 45th fastest – too slow to make the 43-car starting lineup. An engine problem sapped the car's horsepower, resulting in a speed loss of more than 7 mph.

"I am not disappointed with our efforts in Daytona, and everyone was great about working toward our goal to make the show," Johnson said, following his qualification run around the 2.5-mile high-banked tri-oval. "Our sponsors have been great, not only in their support of our American Legion/David Law Firm race team, but of my family and our effort in promoting The American Legion."

Speedweeks wasn't a complete loss. "We hauled our Crate Late Model Chevrolet with us so we could participate in the 44th annual World Series of Asphalt Stockcar Racing at New Smyrna," he said. "In our first race at the high-banked, one-half-mile oval, we finished in 13th place. In subsequent races, we collected a couple of top-10 finishes and one top-five. We also finished the week seventh in points."

The 76 Freedom Car team is back in Mooresville, N.C., getting Johnson's intermediate ARCA car ready for the Rattlesnake 150 at Texas Motor Speedway on April 16, which will be broadcast live on the SPEED network.

www.legion.org/racing

[CONGRESS]

The president's priorities

Shinseki releases proposal to ramp up funding to reduce VA backlog, homelessness.

At \$125 billion, the White House's proposed VA budget for fiscal 2011 is its biggest ever and promises to produce results on two issues that greatly frustrate The American Legion: the backlog of undecided benefits claims and veteran

homelessness. The administration's request divided funding nearly in half: \$60.3 billion in discretionary spending (mostly for health care) and \$64.7 billion in mandatory funding (for such costs as disability payments and pensions).



VA Secretary Eric Shinseki

"VA's 2011 budget request covers many areas but focuses on three central issues that are of critical importance to our veterans: easier access to benefits and services, faster disability-claims decisions, and ending the downward spiral that results in veterans' homelessness," VA Secretary Eric Shinseki said when announcing the proposal.

The American Legion has lobbied in recent years to see all three of the department's highest priorities get the funding they need. "We are certainly pleased with this budget because it meets or exceeds most of The American Legion's funding recommendation," National Commander Clarence Hill said.

The backlog of undecided VA benefits claims is estimated at between 500,000 and 1 million. The proposed budget asks for more than 4,000 additional claims processors and an increase of \$460 million over last year. Those increases are expected to only keep pace with an expected 30-percent leap in claims from 2009 to 2011. Ultimately, reduction of the backlog will have to come from both increased staff and the development of a more efficient electronic claims-processing system, for which \$145 million is set aside.

Shinseki backed up his goal to eliminate homelessness among veterans with a \$4.2 billion request that includes \$294 million in expanded initiatives. VA operates the largest homeless-assistance system in the nation.

Other highlights of the proposed 2011 budget include:

- \$44 million for an automated system to process applications for the new GI Bill.
- \$5.2 billion for mental health, to expand services and integrate them better into overall care.
- \$250 million for increased health-care access for veterans in rural areas, including VA's telehealth program.
- \$217.6 million for women veterans' needs, including more training for VA staff and peer-to-peer programs.
- \$251 million for cemetery operations and maintenance.
- \$1.15 billion for major construction, including funding for five medical facilities.

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[LAW]

Stolen Valor showdown

Three cases will test the law's constitutionality.

Three years ago, the Stolen Valor Act became the law of the land. The intent was, as then-Sen. Conrad Burns, R-Mont., said at the time, "to protect the reputation of our military heroes with the full force of law. Those who seek to steal recognition that they have not earned must be held accountable and brought to justice."

Unfortunately, that law is under attack from the ACLU and others who say it violates First Amendment protections. Three cases moving through the courts will test the law's constitutionality. In California, Xavier Alvarez, a municipal water-board member, claimed he was a former Marine with 25 years of service and the Medal of Honor. In Colorado, Rick Strandlof – aka Rick Duncan – claimed he was a Naval Academy graduate who served in the Pentagon on 9/11 and as a battalion commander for a Marine unit in Fallujah. He said he was wounded in the battle and received a Silver Star for valor. And in Houston, Michael Patrick McManus attended a political function in a general's uniform replete with two Distinguished Service Crosses, a Purple Heart, a Silver Star and a Combat Infantryman's Badge with two stars.

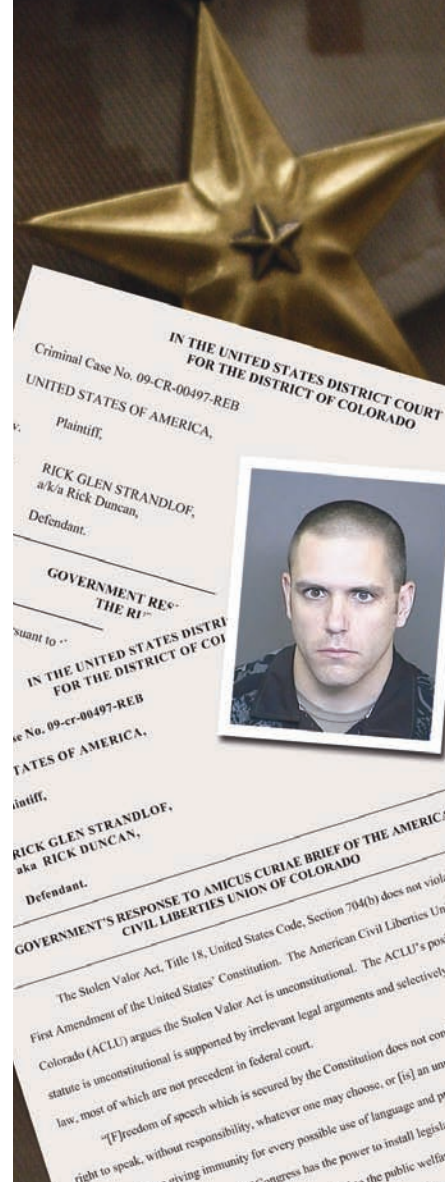
Not one of these men's claims withstood the scrutiny of skeptical veterans who requested discharge papers proving their alleged military honors. Alvarez's case is on appeal to the 9th Circuit, Strandlof's case is working its way through the District Court of Colorado, and U.S. attorneys in Houston are preparing a case against McManus. The American Legion is posting developments and analyses on its blog, The Burn Pit.

At issue essentially is whether lies are protected speech. According to a brief filed by the Rutherford Institute, which is backing Strandlof and the ACLU position, "false claims of military distinction do not in any real sense diminish the honor earned and bestowed on those who have truly earned this nation's highest military award."

The government responded, "To the contrary, 'substantial harm' is indeed caused by false claims of military honors. People who lie about having received military decorations generally do so for a reason. They seek to deceive others for personal gain, and to try to manipulate people's behavior through falsehood."



www.legion.org/burnpit



[ACTIVE DUTY]

Parachutes 2.0

The Army is replacing its 50-year-old parachute system. The new T-11 parachute, which will replace the T-10 model over the next five years, can handle 400 pounds of weight (rather than just 360 pounds), offers a better canopy and has a proven record of reducing injury rates for soldiers in testing, *National Defense* magazine reports.

Designed by Airborne Systems of New Jersey, the new parachute system positions the reserve handle in the center of the pack, enabling troops to yank it with either hand. The T-11 also has a significantly lower rate of descent – 18 feet per second compared to the T-10's 22 feet per second.

[WAR ON TERROR]

Counterterrorism commitment in Yemen

CENTCOM commander Gen. David Petraeus reports that counterterrorism funding for Yemen will more than double in 2010, from \$70 million to nearly \$150 million.

Armed Forces Press Service reports this category of funding for Yemen has exploded in recent years, jumping from \$4.6 million in 2006 to \$26 million in 2007 to the estimated \$150 million in 2010.

[MILITARY AFFAIRS]

A MOP that blows up

The Pentagon is pressing weapons developers to deliver a new bomb to penetrate underground targets encased by as much as 10,000 pounds of reinforced concrete. The "massive ordnance penetrator," or MOP, will be the largest non-nuclear bomb in the U.S. inventory, The Associated Press reports.

The new bomb, which should be ready by summer, will carry 5,300 pounds of explosives and fly aboard a B-2.

When asked if the bomb is needed for possible operations against Iranian or North Korean targets, a Pentagon spokesman called the MOP "a capability we think is necessary given the world we live in."



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How to submit a reunion

The *American Legion Magazine* publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280, e-mail reunions@legion.org or submit information via our Web site, www.legion.org/reunions.

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, The American Legion Magazine will publish a group's listing only once a year.**

Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life mem-

berships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**.

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**. Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

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ARMY

1st Bn 33rd Armd Arty Div (All Eras), Fort Knox, Radcliff, KY, 5/13-15, Jack Grant, (765) 643-8226, jjgrant@att.net; **1st Cav Div Assn**, Bloomington, MN, 6/2-6, Charles Freeman, (864) 366-5722; **1st Inf Div "Big Red One"**, San Antonio, 8/25-29, Edward Burke, (215) 661-1969, soc1lid@aol.com; **6th US Cav Assn**, Chattanooga, TN, 6/11-13, Gary West, (405) 692-3462, gwest73044@yahoo.com; **9th Inf Div Society**, Nashville, TN, 5/20-23, Gonzalo Garza, recon6667@att.net; **10th Inf Div 35th FA (Schweinfurt, Germany)**, Arlington, TX, 9/10-11, Loran Patton, mdpattton@windstream.net; **11th & 328th Trans Co (Nellingen, Germany)**, Pigeon Forge, TN, 5/16-20, Allen Causseaux, (703) 971-3218, abc5822@cox.net; **11th Armd Cal Rgt Blackhorse Assn**, Houston, 6/9-13, Gene Johnson, (936) 205-4553, reunion@blackhorse.org; **23rd Inf Rgt (Korean War Branch)**, Pueblo, CO, 9/7-11, Jim Coulos, (630) 232-2042; **25th Inf Div Assn**, Boston, 9/12-18, Sarah Krause, (215) 248-2572, tropicdn@aol.com; **26th Yankee Inf Div**, Portland, ME, 6/10-12, Sam Thompson, (508) 285-4656, stthompson.1sgret@comcast.net; **68th AAA Gun Bn 508th Opns Det**, Bloomington, MN, 9/16-19, Bill Valentin, (952) 895-0396, lala_valentin.1112@comcast.net; **70th Inf Div**, San Antonio, 9/15-19, John Hilderbrand, (714) 871-7964, jonmar@aol.com; **80th Inf Blue Ridge Div**, Greensboro, NC, 8/11-15, Max Schmidt, (336) 288-0983; **84th Eng Bn Const (Vietnam)**, Las Vegas, 6/24-27, Richard Sharp, (314) 821-8640, kwagnerasha@aol.com; **84th Inf Div Railsplitter Society (WWII)**, Cincinnati, 8/27-29, Richard Jamieson, (513) 732-2317; **87th Inf Div Legacy Assn**, Pittsburgh, 8/18-22, Karen Lilley, (508) 869-6951, lilley22@charter.net

88th Inf Div Assn & Trust, Chicago, 9/2-5, Fred Lincoln, (508) 584-4169, f.lincoln@comcast.net; **90th FA Bn Assn 25th Inf Div**, Pittsburgh, 8/22-25, Ray Hask, (724) 727-3132; **109th FA Grp (WWII)**, Bushkill Falls, PA, 10/17-22, Al Petrogallo, (410) 740-7018; **120th Avn Co "The Deans" (Vietnam)**, Springdale, AR, 6/4-6, Robin Lunstrum, chetandkaren@netzero.com; **169th Cbt Eng Bn Assn (Vietnam)**, Waynesville, MO, 9/10-11, Tom Ebrite, (765) 286-4906, s2snoopy@comcast.net; **183rd Avn Co Seahorses Birdog Pilots (Vietnam)**, Colorado Springs, CO, 9/9-12, Mack Gibson, (704) 655-8584, mgibson55@roadrunner.com; **300th Eng Cbt Bn (WWII)**, Dallas, 6/3-6, Warren Chancellor, (512) 864-0296, wec24@verizon.net; **458th Trans Co DUKWS, LARCS & PBR (1943-1977)**, Philadelphia, 6/22-26, Jim Winstead, (417) 882-7229, pbrrmp@sbcglobal.net; **458th Trans Co DUKWS, LARCS, & PBR (1943-1977)**, Philadelphia, 6/22-26, Jim Winstead, (417) 882-7229, pbrrmp@sbcglobal.net; **509th Eng Co Panel Bridge (Vietnam)**, Branson, MO, 9/23-25, Richard Trapp, (402) 759-3657, riep2@cox.net; **519th Trans Assn (Thailand)**, Colorado Springs, CO, 6/24-27, Joseph Wilson, (719) 310-3558, jjwilson@pcisys.net; **544th Eng Co (Vietnam, 1967-1972)**, St. Roberts, MO, 7/22-25, Arthur Halmstad, (920) 738-5326, arthurhalmstad@yahoo.com; **793rd MP Bn Assn**, Atlanta, 9/22-26, Richard Kealy, (905) 987-5016, richl793@rogers.com; **A&B 4th QM Bn 4th Armd Div (Goppingen, Germany, 1957-1960)**, Pigeon Forge, TN, 5/2-5, Bobby Rains, (704) 538-9436, bogan-131@bell-south.net; **Air Corp Pilot Classes (WWII)**, Nashville, 9/9-12, Stan Yost, (239) 466-1473; **Dental Det (Fort Carson, CO, 1961-1964)**, Colorado Springs, CO, 9/3-6, Charles Pitzo, (856) 931-7629; **FA OCS Class 2-60**, Fort Sill, OK, 5/5-8, Herbert Siegel, (863) 852-3875, hsiegel@cfl.rr.com; **Ferris Barracks**, Branson, MO, 5/20-23, Karen Steele, (800) 542-6768, karen@bransongrayline.com; **Korean Mil Advisory Grp**, Nashville, 7/9-11, Dale Griffith, (402) 393-4904, dalepanthers@aol.com; **Saumur Sig Depot**, San Diego, 7/11-15, Richard Miller, (949) 770-2543, rkgmiller@aol.com; **US Constabulary (Germany, Austria & Hanscom AFB)**, Bedford, MA, 4/27, Bob McLellan, (508) 896-6557, rjcm02631@yahoo.com; **Vietnam Duster, Quads, Searchlights, Vulcans & Hawks Assn**, Savannah, GA, 7/7-11, Bruce Geiger, (914) 576-1050, ndqsa@cox.net

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JOINT

Assn Retired Mil Musicians, Huntsville, AL, 9/16-18, Bill von Kamp, (256) 533-1674, suevkamp@aol.com; **Korean War Vet Assn MO Dept**, Rolla, MO, 6/24-26, Don Gutmann, (314) 739-7922, phylidon24@att.net; **Nebraska Vietnam Vets**, Norfolk, NE, 8/12-15, Dennis Larson, (402) 640-7008, dlarson47_5@msn.com; **Nuclear Energy Assn NPPC Course (Fort Belvoir, VA)**, St. Louis, 9/22-26, Tom Steinhart, (217) 877-1360, usafneareunion@gmail.com; **Ranger CV/CVA 61 (All Crew, Sqdn & Mar Det or TADs)**, San Antonio, 9/22-25, Bill Broadus, (281) 414-5981, jbclassics@stealwave.net

MARINES

1st ANGLICO, Quantico, VA, 6/3-5, John Maurer, (614) 262-9002, jmaurer@columbus.rr.com; **2nd Bn 4th Mar Assn**, Pleasanton, CA, 9/1-5, Brooks Wilson, (559) 298-3094, brooks@adanceofflight.com; **22nd Rgt (WWII)**, Las Vegas, 10/10-14, Ben Ware, (330) 332-4910; **Charlie Co 1st Bn 1st Mar (Korea)**, San Diego, 9/8-11, Al Baiocchi, (925) 933-1100, usmcc11@sbcglobal.net; **Florida Mustang Assn**, Crystal River, FL, 5/21-23, Gary Gray, (352) 674-9139; **Hotel Co 2nd Bn 5th Mar & 1st Mar Div (Vietnam)**, Quantico, VA, 8/6-9, Joe Sonderman, (614) 294-2328, exdoc69@columbus.rr.com; **Mar Corps Plt 1066**, Branson, MO, 6/10-13, Karen Steele, (800) 542-6768, karen@bransongrayline.com; **Tankers Assn**, Seattle, 7/6-11, Bob McDaniels, (360) 466-3080

NAVY

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Edward Siemietkoski, (856) 829-6470, edwardpro23@verizon.net; **Walton DE 361**, San Diego, 10/13-16, Jerry Hudson, (573) 291-1922, marjer67@ktsi.net; **Wisconsin Midwest LSM/LSMR**, Wisconsin Dells, WI, 5/17-18, Allen Westerberg, (952) 894-1116, maral315@msn.com

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COMRADES IN DISTRESS

118th Inf Bn (Bad Hersfeld, Germany, May 1980-Aug 1982), Robert Eugene Jacobs Jr. seeks witnesses to verify a fall from the rear of a military ambulance on the Autobahn while transporting a civilian patient to 97th Gen Hosp in Frankfurt. CID 1500

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1/52nd 198th LIB Americal Div, Terry Wyrick, m60gunner@hotmail.com
1st Cav 15th QM, Charles Freeman, (864) 366-5772
3rd Co Navy Boot Camp (Great Lakes, IL, 1950), William Wade, billandbev@live.com
8th Cal Rgt (Camp Crawford & Camp Whittington, Hokkaido, Japan, 1953-1956), Al Sanderson, (319) 283-4043
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338th SRS 1371st Photo M&C Sqdn & 1370th Photo M Grp (Palm Beach AFB, 1951-1955), F. Miller, (352) 753-3622, pamfem@embarqmail.com

377th Sth Hosp (Seoul, 1946-1947), Francis Head, (541) 574-1942

506th SAC Ftr Wing DOW/Tinker AFB (1954-1958), Jim Fernandes, (405) 761-0530

508th Abn Rgt Cbt Team & Support Co (Fort Bragg, NC, Fort Campbell, KY & Japan, 1953-1957), James Strickland, (704) 932-0973, jstrickland002@carolina.rr.com

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547th Eng Cbt Bn (Gelnhausen or Darmstadt, Germany, 1944-1991), Pat McDowell, (717) 249-7752, cmcdowellp@aol.com

553rd Recon Wing, 553rd Recon Sqdn (Korat Royal Thai AB, Thailand, 1968-1970), Gilbert Jennings, (405) 737-5134, gilj@cox.net

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Camp Asan (Guam, Marianas Islands, 1950-1959), Jerry Sullivan, (314) 843-5529, liljersully@sbcglobal.net

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HQ Btry 4th Bn 3rd Arty & 1st Armd Div (Fort Hood, TX, 1966-1968), John Long, (740) 323-1030

HQ co 3Bn 33rd Armd & 3rd Armd Div (Kirch-Goens, Germany, Toronto & Ohio, 1967-1969), Ron Dacko, (740) 537-5518

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VMFA 314, 542, 513, 115 & 323 Mar Radar Fire Cntl Sec 6-65 to 8-66 (Da Nang, Vietnam), Thomas Boland, (803) 788-7736, colusar1@hotmail.com

TAPS

William J. Bandera, Dept. of New York. Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 2007-2010.

John R. McNamara, Dept. of New York. Dept. Cmdr. 1961-1962, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Atl. Memb. 1962-1963, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1977-1981 and 1985-2001, Nat'l Conv. Cmsn. Memb. 1962-1968, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1955-1956 and 1957-1958, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1972-1976, Nat'l Legis. Cmsn. Memb. 1976-1977 and Nat'l & Homeland Sec. Vice Chmn. 1984-1985.

Robert L. Rea, Dept. of Oklahoma. Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 2009-2010.

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Bad spellers of the world, untie!

A MAN WALKED into the office of an eminent psychiatrist and sat down to explain his problem.

"Doctor, doctor!" he started.

"No need to repeat yourself," the doctor said. "One 'doctor' is enough."

"Yes, well, I've got this problem. I keep hallucinating that I'm a large, white, hairy Pyrenees Mountain dog. It's crazy. I don't know what to do!"

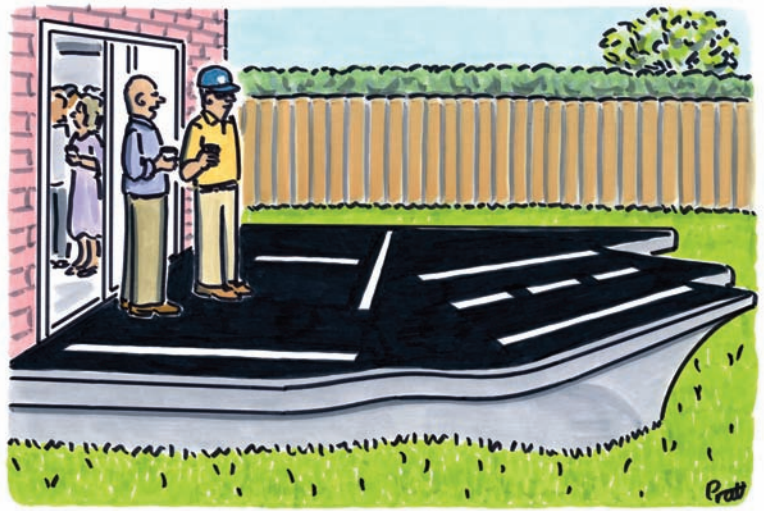
"A common canine complex," the doctor soothingly replied. "Come over here and lie down on the couch."

"Oh, no, doctor. I'm not allowed up on the furniture."

TWO ELDERLY LADIES had played bridge together for many years, and naturally had come to know each other pretty well. One day, during a game of cards, one lady suddenly looked up at the other and said, "I realize we've known each other for many years, but for the life of me, I just can't bring it to mind. Would you please tell me your name again, dear?"

For a few minutes there was silence, before the other lady responded, "How soon do you need to know?"

BE PATIENT and achieve all things. Be impatient and achieve all things faster.



"Nice new deck, Admiral."



"Hours after her world-record high jump, Bessie was disqualified when performance-enhancing cud was found in her system."

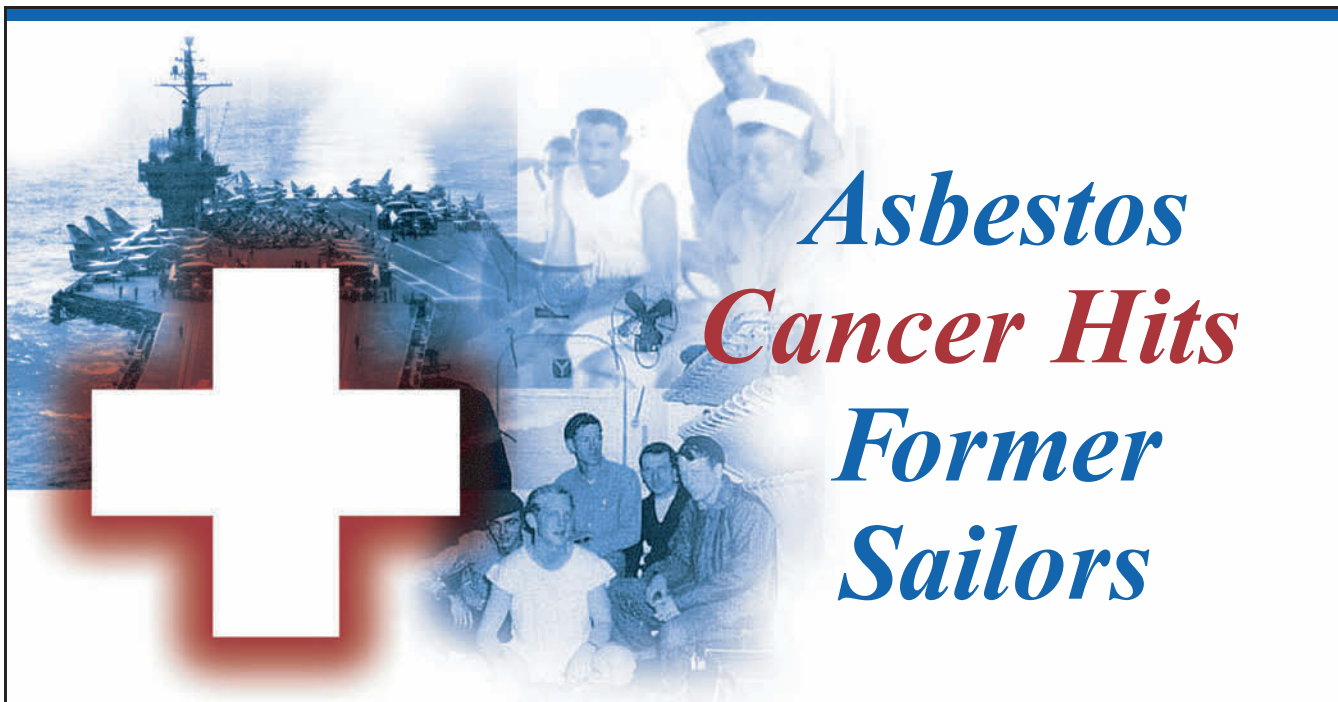


"I've always dreamed of auditing a return like yours."

A MAN AND HIS WIFE were arguing and decided to give each other the silent treatment. The next week, the man realized he needed his wife to wake him at 5 a.m. for a business flight to Chicago. Not wanting to be the first to speak, he wrote on a piece of paper, "Please wake me at 5 a.m."

The next morning the man woke up to discover that it was 9 a.m. and that he had missed his flight. Furious, he was about to go and see why his wife hadn't woken him, when he noticed a piece of paper by the bed. It said, "It's 5 a.m. Wake up."

"VOTERS IN SWITZERLAND will decide next month if animals should have the right to be represented by lawyers in court. If they approve it, it will finally clear the way for the long-awaited lawsuit of *Cat v. String*." – Jimmy Fallon



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